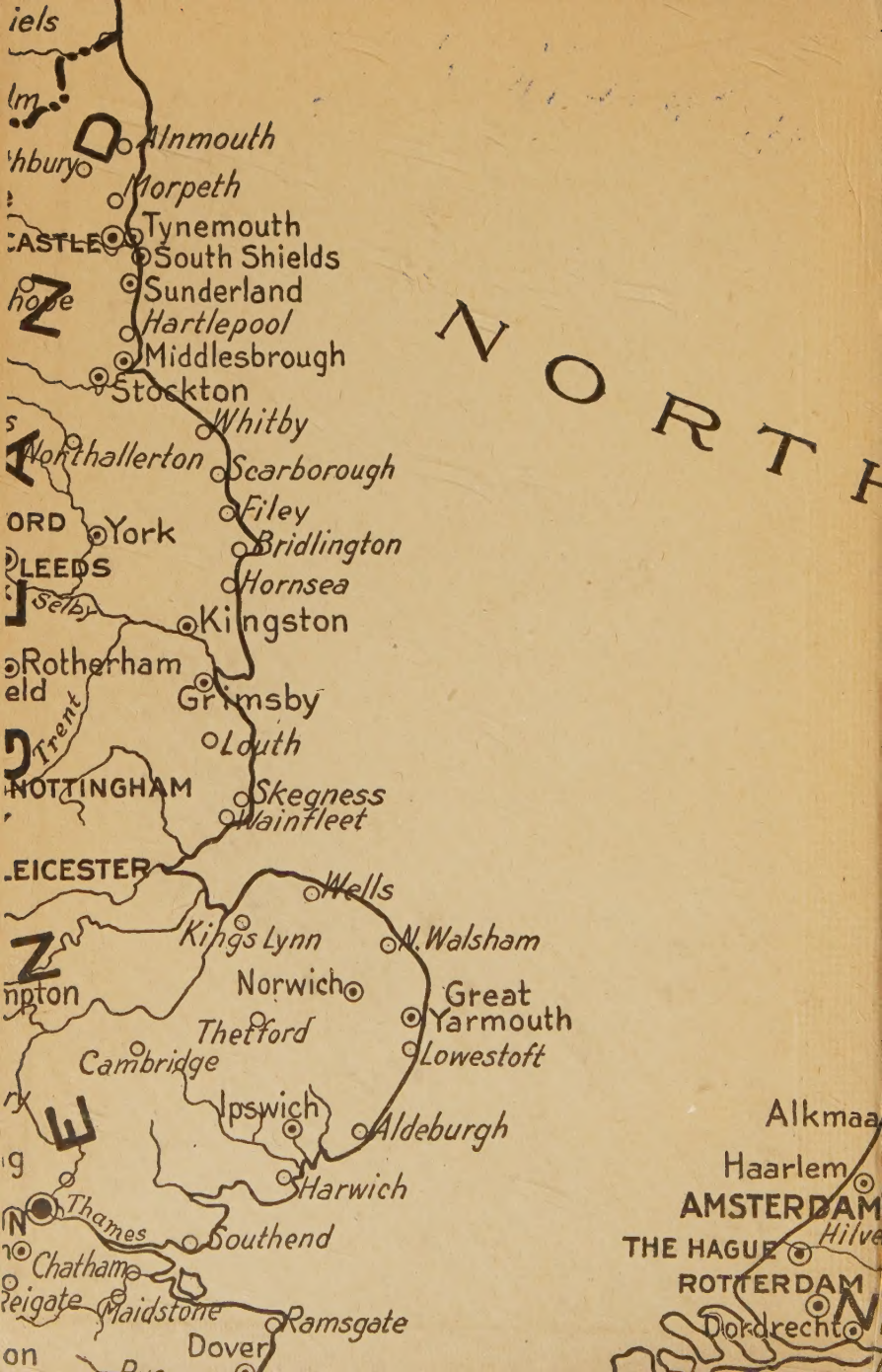
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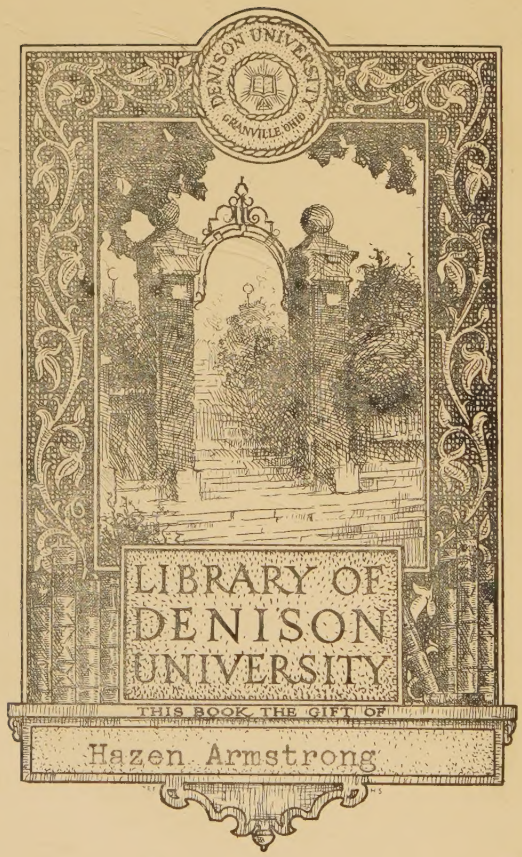
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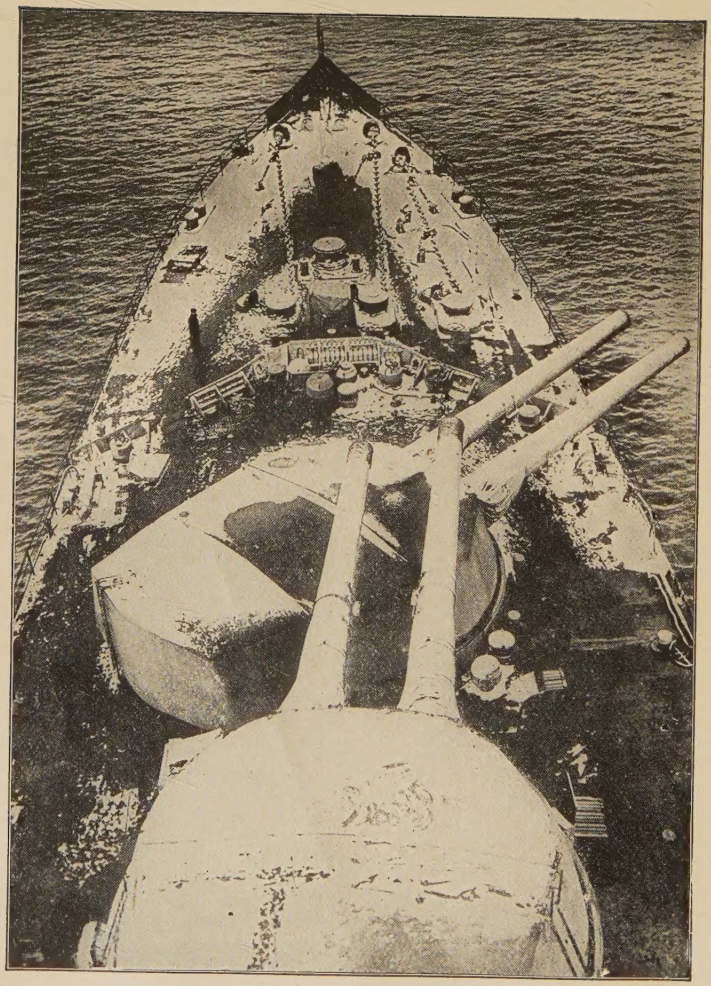
VOLUME II

ENGLAND'S EFFORT

LETTERS TO AN AMERICAN FRIEND



Spring-time in the North Sea—Snow on a British Battleship.

THE WAR ON ALL FRONTS

ENGLAND'S EFFORT

LETTERS TO AN AMERICAN FRIEND

BY

MRS. HUMPHRY WARD

WITH A PREFACE BY

JOSEPH H. CHOATE

ILLUSTRATED

73702

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1919

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Preface

HAS ENGLAND DONE ALL SHE COULD?

That is the question which Mrs. Ward, replying to some doubts and queries of an American friend, has undertaken to answer in this series of letters, and every one who reads them will admit that her answer is as complete and triumphant as it is thrilling. Nobody but a woman, an Englishwoman of warm heart, strong brain, and vivid power of observation, could possibly have written these letters which reflect the very soul of England since this wicked and cruel war began. She has unfolded and interpreted to us, as no one else, I think, has even attempted to do, the development and absolute transformation of English men and women, which has enabled them, living and dying, to secure for their proud nation under God that "new birth of freedom" which Lincoln at Gettysburg prophesied for his own countrymen. Really the cause is the same, to secure the selfsame thing, "that government of the people, by the people, and for the people may not perish from

the earth";—and if any American wishes to know how this has been accomplished, he must read these letters, which were written expressly for our enlightenment.

Mrs. Ward had marvellous qualifications for this patriotic task. The granddaughter of Doctor Arnold and the niece of Matthew Arnold, from childhood up she has been as deeply interested in politics and in public affairs as she has been in literature, by which she has attained such world-wide fame, and next to English politics, in American politics and American opinion. She has been a staunch believer in the greatness of America's future, and has maintained close friendship with leaders of public thought on both sides of the water. Her only son is a member of Parliament, and is fighting in the war, just as all the able-bodied men she knows are doing.

She has received from the English government special opportunities of seeing what England has been doing in the war, and has been allowed to go with her daughter where few English men and no other women have been allowed to go, to see the very heart of England's preparedness. She has visited, since the war began, the British fleet, the very key of the whole situation, without whose unmatched power and ever-increasing strength the Allies at the outset must have succumbed. She

has watched, always under the protection and guidance of that wonderful new Minister of Munitions, Lloyd George, the vast activity of that ministry throughout the country, and finally in a motor tour of five hundred miles, through the zone of the English armies in France, she has seen with her own eyes, that marvellous organization of everything that goes to make and support a great army, which England has built up in the course of eighteen months behind her fighting line. She has witnessed within three-quarters of a mile of the fighting line, with a gas helmet at hand, ready to put on, a German counter attack after a successful English advance, something which no other woman, except herself and her daughter, who accompanied her, has ever had the opportunity to see.

Mrs. Ward admits that at the beginning England was unprepared, which itself demonstrated that as a Nation she never wished for war with Germany, and never expected it. Her countrymen had no faith in Lord Roberts's ten-year-long agitation for universal national service, based on the portentous growth of the German army and navy. She never knew of any hatred of Germany in the country. On the contrary, she realized what England and all the rest of the world owed to Germany in so many ways.

England was not absolutely unprepared in the sense that the United States is unprepared, even for self-defense from external attack, but except for the fleet and her little expeditionary force, England had neither men nor equipment equal to the fighting of a great Continental war.

The wholly unexpected news of the invasion of Belgium aroused the whole country to realize that war on a scale never known before had come, and, as the firing upon Fort Sumter awakened America, convinced England that she must fight to the death for her liberties, unready as she was;—but Mr. Balfour, the First Lord of the Admiralty, says that, since the war began, she has added one million to the tonnage of her navy, and has doubled its personnel, and is adding more every day.

In the matter of munitions the story that Mrs. Ward tells is wonderful, almost beyond belief. Much had been done in the first eight months of the war, in the building of munition shops, and the ordering of vast quantities from abroad, before the second battle of Ypres, in April, 1915, which led to the formation of the new Coalition Ministry, including a wholly new department, the Ministry of Munitions, with Mr. Lloyd George at its head.

From that time to this the work has been colossal,

and almost incredible, and without serious collision with the working classes. Vast new buildings have been erected all over England, and a huge staff, running into thousands, set in action. The new Minister has set out with determination to get the thing done at whatever cost, and to remove all obstacles that he found in his way. The Government has absolutely taken control of the whole work of the creation of munitions and the regulation of workmen, employed in it by whatever employers, and everything and everybody has had to submit to his imperious will, and the greatest change of all has been the employment of women on a vast scale to do the work that only men had ever done before. France had set about it immediately after the battle of the Marne, and allowed no Frenchman to remain idle who could do such work.

Mrs. Ward does not fail to do full justice to the working men of Great Britain, and shows that besides the hundreds of thousands that they have sent to the fighting line, a million and a half remained at work in the shops, creating munitions with the aid of skilled experts and the astonishing help of the women, who never before had expected to have anything to do with guns and shells, with bombs, rifles, and machine-guns. The old ways were laid aside, old distinctions of class and sex

ing narratives on this subject. She takes for her text what Mr. Lloyd George said in his speech in the House of Commons on reviewing his new department: "Unless we quicken our movements, damnation will fall on the sacred cause for which so much gallant blood has flowed," and Mr. Asquith's serious words in December: "We cannot go on," said he, "depending upon foreign countries for our munitions. We haven't the ships to spare to bring them home, and the cost is too great. We must make them ourselves."

Mrs. Ward dwells with keen insight upon the difficulties met with among the trade-unions and labor people, and successfully overcome, and explains in full what they call over there the work of the Dilution Commissioners, which is a wholly new phrase for us, and she gives this clear definition: "Dilution means, of course, that under the sharp analysis of necessity, much engineering work, generally reckoned as 'skilled' work, and reserved to 'skilled' workmen by a number of union regulations, is seen to be capable of solution into various processes, some of which can be sorted out from the others, as within the capacity of the unskilled, or semi-skilled worker. By so dividing them up and using superior labor with economy, only where it is really necessary, it can be made to go infinitely further, and the in-

ferior, or untrained, labor can then be brought into work where nobody supposed it could be used; where, in fact, it never has been used." This novel experiment, together with the equally novel employment of women in such work, soon proved a triumphant success, and the women proved themselves able to do the work of men, some of it even better. There were, of course, difficulties at first, but the mischief, whatever it was, was quickly cured, and in one factory that Mrs. Ward names, "men and women soon began to do their best. The output of the factory, which had been planned for four thousand shells a week, ran up to twenty thousand, and everything has gone smoothly since."

The adaptation of firms and factories, already existing, the control of which was taken by the Government, was wonderful, but the national shell-factories, founded, financed, and run by the Ministry of Munitions, are more wonderful still, and give us many new ideas about government ownership in an emergency, which we may sometimes have to think of more seriously. The speed, the efficiency, the success of the new system have been marvellous, so that in the short space of a year the demands of Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Asquith have been satisfied, and England will depend no more upon foreign contracts and foreign supplies for her ammunition,

but will be able not only to manufacture all she can use herself, but to help to supply her Allies.

In one department of labor, it is a very startling thing to learn that "in a single fuse factory, what they call the danger buildings, mostly women are employed. About five hundred women are found at work in one of these factories on different processes connected with the delicate mechanism and filling of the fuse and gaine, some of which is really dangerous, like detonator work." It is the insertion in the shell of the little pellet which gives it its death-dealing power, that is so risky, but the women do not shrink from even this. In the largest fuse shop known, quite new, fourteen hundred girls, in one shift, are at work.

"An endless spectacle of gun-carriages, naval turrets, torpedo-tubes, army railway-carriages, small Hotchkiss guns for merchant ships, tool-making shops, gauge shops, seems to be going on forever, and in the tool-making shops the output has risen from forty-four thousand to three million a year." The vastness of the work, and the incessant and enormous multiplication of all the products for war must be as overwhelming as it is monotonous. And then there were the huge shipyards, which before the war were capable of the berth of twenty ships at once, from the largest battleship downward,

and which, as we have already had Mr. Balfour's word for it, have since the beginning of the war added a million tons to the navy, but Mrs. Ward in her rapid journeys had not time to stop and inspect these, to our very great regret, for her description of them would have been most instructive.

She declares from actual observation that in the Clyde district, in whose populous centre some threats of disquiet have existed, the work done by thousands and tens of thousands of workmen since the beginning of the war, especially in the great shipyards, and done with the heartiest and most self-sacrificing good-will, has been simply invaluable to the nation, and will never be forgotten, and the invasion of women there has, perhaps, been more startling to the workmen than anywhere else. Where not a single woman was employed in the works and factories before the war, except in textiles, "there will soon be fifteen thousand of them in the munition workshops alone, and that will not be the end."

Wherever she goes, Mrs. Ward's eyes are wide open. From her own home, which is in the midst of one of the most patriotic regions of the realm, she can witness the perpetual activity which has come about in preparation for the war in all its varied phases and branches; every-

thing and everybody is in vigorous motion, both there and in all the counties of England which she has visited. Great camps in every direction for the shelter and training of recruits, all coming and going, all marching and countermarching, training and drilling everywhere, and as fast as the citizen is converted into a soldier, he is bound for the seat of war with all the equipments that war requires, tramping everywhere, tramp, tramp, along the land; tramp, tramp, along the sea, until the new supports, all ready for vital service, reach their destination on French soil.

Mrs. Ward has made a careful study of the effect of the novel introduction of women into all these works of men, especially in the munition factories, and dwells with great significance upon the rapidity of the women's piece-work and the mingling of classes, where educated and refined girls work side by side and very happily with those of an humbler type. What Mrs. Ward well calls "the common spirit" inspires them all, and holds them all in just and equal relations. At every step she is startled by the vastness of the work and the immense hand that women have in it, finding one shop turning out about four thousand shrapnel and four thousand high-explosive shells per week, heavy shell work all, which they thought at first they must furnish men to lift

in and out of the machines, but "the women thrust the men aside in five minutes." Surely this new education of women, of these girls and women who are to become the mothers of the next generation, must have a most inspiring and exalting effect upon the days to come. War may be postponed for whole generations, but England will never fail to be ready for it as a necessary part of the education of the race.

It is quite evident that this war is breaking down the barriers that have heretofore been impassable, not only between men and women, but between the various classes of society, and that it cannot possibly end without bringing these more closely together, all working to the same end in a more perfect harmony, and that the result of it must be that England will hereafter be an even more perfect democracy than it has been up to this time.

France! Glorious France! The conduct of whose government and people in the war seems to have been absolutely perfect, has at last reached a wonderful result after her hundred years of agonies and revolutions. We hear from France no complaints, no internal dissensions, but all the people, mankind and womankind, working together, each in its proper sphere, to the one common end, the salvation of the State. I trust that we

shall never forget all that the world and we, especially, owe to France. She is adding to our obligations now by fighting our battles for us.

And now with her daughter under the special protection and guidance of the war office, this distinguished woman followed the khaki-clad soldiers of England, now numbered by millions, across the channel, and everything was thrown freely open to her. She soon found out what the great supply bases, on which the British army in France rests, really mean, made up of the Army Ordnance, Army Service, Army Medical, Railroad, Motor, and Transport, and she found it a deeply interesting study, "whose work has involved the labor of some of the best brains in the army," and she learned the organizing power that has gone to make the career of the English army in France possible.

There was the immense dock, and its vast storehouse, the largest in the world, "built three years before the war, partly, it is said, by German money, to house the growing cotton trade of the port, but now it houses a large proportion of the food of the British army," a building half a mile long, bounded on one side by the docks, where the ships discharge the stores and the men, and on the other by the railway lines where the trains are perpetually loading for the front. On the

quays ships of all nations, except Germany, are pouring out their stores, and on the other side the trucks that are going to the front are loading with the supplies that are wanted for every regiment in the service. Her eyes light upon one wired in space, labelled "Medical Comforts," and generally known as "The Cage," where, while medical necessaries are housed elsewhere, are "the dainties, the special foods, the easing appliances of all kinds," which are to make life bearable to the wounded men, and she stops to think how the shade of Florence Nightingale would have paused at this spot.

The huge sheds of Army Ordnance are filled with everything that a soldier does not eat, all metal stores, whatever, and the men who work in them are housed in one of the longest sheds in tiers of bunks from floor to ceiling, and then there are the repairing sheds and workshops, established near by, and that is the most wonderful thing of the whole to my mind—never done before in connection with an army in the field. Trainsful of articles to be repaired come down from the front every day, and almost every imaginable article that the men at the front can use, from guns to boots, comes here to be repaired, or if found beyond repair, to be sent to Yorkshire for shoddy. The marvellous thing is that, as soon as they are received, they are repaired and made nearly as good as new and

returned to their owners at the front, a vast work in itself. The boot and uniform sheds alone, where again she finds five hundred French women and girls, and the harness-making room are doing an enormous work. The Colonel in charge began work with one hundred and forty men, and is now employing more than a thousand, and his repairing sheds are saving thousands of pounds a week to the British government.

Recreation and amusement are supplied in near locality for the waiting soldiers and, although the snow is more than ankle-deep, they visit such places as recreation rooms and cinema theaters, and on a neighboring hill great troops of men are going through some of the last refinements of drill before they start for the front. Here are trenches of all kinds and patterns, in which the men may practise, planned according to the latest experience brought from the front. "The instructors are all men returned from the front, and the new recruits, trained up to this last point, would not be patient of any other teachers."

Having thus seen all that one day could afford them at the very base of the great army, our visitors make their way in closed motors through the snow, passing scores of motor lorries, and other wagons, stuck in the snow-drifts. They stop for the night at a pleasant

hotel full of officers, mostly English, belonging to the Lines of Communication, and a few of the mothers and sisters of the poor wounded in the neighboring hospitals, who have come over to nurse them.

Every gun, every particle of munition, clothing, and equipment, and whatever else is necessary, including the food of the armies, every horse, every vehicle, has to be brought across the British channel, to maintain and reinforce the ever-growing British army, and the ever-daily increasing congestion at all the ports makes it more and more difficult every day to receive, disembark, accommodate, and forward the multitude of men and the masses of material, and all the time there are thousands of troops passing through, thousands in the hospitals, and thousands at work on the docks and storehouses. Everything tending to Tommy Atkins's comfort is supplied, including again palatial cinemas and concerts, all of which results in excellent behavior and the best of relations between the British soldier and the French inhabitants. At the docks armies of laborers and lines of ships discharging men, horses, timber, rations, fodder, coal, coke, petrol, and the same at the storehouses and depots.

The visitors spend a long Sunday morning in the motor transport depot, and it gave a good illustration

of the complete system of discipline and organization that prevailed everywhere. This depot began, said the Colonel in charge, on the 13th of August, 1914, "with a few balls of string and a bag of nails." Its present staff is about five hundred. All the drivers of twenty thousand motor vehicles are tested here, and the depot exhibits three hundred and fifty different types of vehicles, and in round figures, one hundred thousand separate parts are now dealt with, stored, and arranged in this same depot. The Sunday morning began with a simple service in the Young Men's Christian Association hut, at which five hundred motor-drivers attended, about half of the whole number in the station.

The same day they explored endless camps and the wards of a Red Cross hospital. It was impossible to take in everything at once, and our ladies retired at night, bewildered by mingled impressions of "human energy, human intelligence, human suffering," but full of pride and exultation at the efficiency of their country and of the good relations of their soldiers with the French. They carried with them as a last impression of the day the picture of a canteen worked day and night in three shifts by a heroic band of women close by the railway station, full of soldiers just departing for the front, young, gay and full of spirits; then came

the train to take the soldiers off for the fighting line, and the women, left behind, set up the song, already familiar in the Midlands, "Keep the home fires burning till the boys come home."

In the village where they stopped, some forty miles from the actual front, a special messenger from the general headquarters brings the amazing news that General Headquarters invites Mrs. Ward and her daughter for two days, and will send a motor for them, if they accept, which, of course, they did upon the instant, looking forward with eagerness to the great mysteries of the front, its camps, its men, and its hospitals, that they were to see with their own eyes to-morrow.

The remainder of the day before they are to start for the front suffices for the visit to a camp set down in one of the pleasantest spots in France, a favorite haunt of French artists before the war, now occupied by a British reinforcement camp, the trees having all been cut away, by long lines of hospitals, by a convalescent depot, and by the training grounds, to which we have already referred.

I must copy the bare catalogue of what this vast camp contained: "Sleeping and mess quarters for those belonging to the new armies; sixteen hospitals with twenty-one thousand beds" (and this shows now what

it was to be near the front); "rifle ranges; training camps; a vast laundry, worked by French women under British organization, which washes for all the hospitals thirty thousand pieces a day; recreation huts of every possible kind; a cinema theatre seating eight hundred men, with performances twice a day; nurses clubs; officers clubs; a supply depot for food; an ordnance depot for everything that is not food; railroad sidings on which every kind of man and thing can go out and come in without interruption; a convalescents' depot of two thousand patients; and a convalescent horse depot of two thousand horses; all this in one camp, established since last April."

Ah! But the deepest impression left on the minds of our ladies is of the terrible sufferings in the hospitals, of the smiling endurance with which they were borne, of the timely skill, pity, and devotion of the doctors and nurses, taking care of the twenty thousand wounded. Realizing the sympathy of America with all these scenes and sufferings, they do not fail to note the hospitals organized by the Universities of Chicago and of Harvard, staffed by American sisters and doctors, each providing thirty-four doctors and eighty nurses, and dealing with a thousand patients, and a convalescent depot of two thousand beds. Every day the ambu-

lance train comes in, and splendid hospital ships are taking the brave wounded back to England for home and rest.

And now came the day in which they were to motor forty miles to be the guests of the G. H. Q. Soon they seemed to be in the midst of the battle, "our own guns were thundering away behind us, and the road was more and more broken up by shell holes." The British lines are just beyond, cottages close by, and the German lines just in front of a wood near them, three-quarters of a mile away. Already they had been nearer than any woman, even a nurse, had been in this war, to the actual fighting on the English line, and the cup of impressions was full. They actually saw the brave boys whom they had passed an hour before, sitting in the fields waiting for orders, now marching into the trenches to take their turn there—they knew that they were marching into the jaws of death, but they walked as quietly and as cheerfully as if they were going to a parade, the guns crashing close by them all the time. The firing being too hot for the women, the captain in charge of them was relieved when they elected to turn back.

The next day, their second as guests of G. H. Q., as they came down from breakfast, our ladies were surprised

to find the motor at the door a simple lunch being packed up, and gas-helmets got ready for them to use, for the captain greeted them in the best of spirits with the news that a very successful action had been fought that morning, "we had taken back some trenches on the Ypres-Comines Canal that we lost, a little while ago, and captured about two hundred prisoners; and if we go off at once we shall be in time to see the German counter attack." The one impossible thing for any woman ever to have hoped to see!

Somehow or other they very quickly got to the very post of danger. Soon they got close to the Tower of Ypres, which Mrs. Ward well describes as "mute witness of a crime that beyond the reparation of our own day, history will revenge through years to come." Then the English guns spoke, and they watched and saw the columns of white smoke rising from the German lines as the shells burst. The German lines are right in sight, and soon their shells begin to burst on the English trenches. The German counter attack is on. All the famous sites of the early part of the war are then in sight, but all they can fully see is the bursting German shells, as from moment to moment they explode.

In her final letter Mrs. Ward shows other great efforts which Great Britain has made since the war began;

that the taxes imposed for the support of the war and cheerfully borne demand a fourth part of his income from every well-to-do citizen; that five hundred million sterling, or twenty-five hundred million dollars have been already lent by Britain to her allies, a colossal portion of her income; that she has spent at the yearly rate of three thousand million dollars on the army, a thousand million dollars on the navy, while the munition department is costing about four hundred million sterling, and is employing close upon two million workers, one-tenth, I think, women; that the export trade of the country, in spite of submarines and lack of tonnage, is at this moment greater than it was in the corresponding months of 1913; she has raised an army of four millions of men, and will get all she wants.

What is more precious than all the rest, besides the vast amount of treasure that she has lavished upon the war, besides the rich mansions in all parts of the land that she has devoted to the uses of the sick and the wounded, she has given thousands, tens and hundreds of thousands of her choicest youth, who have willingly surrendered their lives for the great cause; young men of the noblest pedigree, without number, by their lives and deaths have attested their right to be regarded as the flower of the British youth; the professional classes and the univer-

sities have emptied their halls so that the men of Oxford and Cambridge might take their places with the rest, and offer up their lives as willing sacrifices, and all the men of England of every degree have joined with them and been welcomed as brothers in the ranks for the great sacrifice. The rank and file, who are fighting and dying for England, are fighting in the same spirit as their leaders and falling by the hundred thousand for the nation's salvation. How exactly Emerson's noble verse fits them:

> "So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
> So near is God to man,
> When Duty whispers low, 'Thou must,'
> The youth replies, 'I can!'"

No one who reads this book can doubt for a moment, I think, that ENGLAND HAS DONE ALL SHE COULD, has put forth efforts worthy of her history and of her great traditions, that her national spirit is invincible, her national resources inexhaustible, and that her irresistible will to conquer and to rescue freedom and civilization for all the world from this terrible contest, is absolutely sure to win.

All America is vastly indebted to Mrs. Ward for her triumphant success in proving that England has done her best and for making this great story so clear.

In this introduction, too hastily prepared for want of time, which is really little better than a synopsis of the book itself, I have not hesitated to use her own language from beginning to end, as the clearest by which to express and condense her narrative, and with occasional indications by quotation marks.

I still believe absolutely that nine-tenths of my countrymen are in earnest sympathy with the Allies and are confident of their final and complete success.

JOSEPH H. CHOATE.

NEW YORK, May 19th, 1916.

Author's Foreword

THIS little book was the outcome of an urgent call from America sent by various friends whose whole sympathy is with the Allies. I have done my best to meet it, in four strenuous months, during which the British Government has given me every possible facility. But such work has to be done rapidly, and despatched rapidly. I beg my friends, and England's friends, beyond the Atlantic, to excuse its defects. I can honestly say, however, that I have done my best to get at the facts, and that everything which is here put forward rests upon independent enquiry, so far as the limit of time allowed.

The title has caused me much trouble! Will any son of gallant Scotland, or loyalist Ireland, or of those great Dominions, whose share in the war has knit them closer than ever to the Mother Country—should he come across this little book—forgive me that I have finally chosen "England" to stand for us all? "Gott strafe England!" has been the German cry of hate. I have given what I conceive to be "England's" reply. "Britain"—"Great Britain" are words that for all their profound political

significance have still to be steeped a good deal longer in life and literature before they stir the same fibres in us as the old national names. And "England" as the seat of British Government has, it is admitted, a representative and inclusive force. Perhaps my real reason is still simpler. Let any one try the alternatives which suggest themselves, and see how they roll—or do not roll—from the tongue. He or she will, I think, soon be reconciled to "England's Effort"!

MARY A. WARD.

NOTE TO THE FOURTH EDITION

There has been added to this edition an epilogue in the shape of a seventh letter, bringing the story up to August 16, including munitions, finance, the battle of Jutland, and the Somme offensive.

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ENGLAND'S EFFORT

ENGLAND'S EFFORT

I

DEAR H.

Your letter has found me in the midst of work quite unconnected with this hideous war in which for the last eighteen months we in England have lived and moved and had our being. My literary profession, indeed, has been to me, as to others, since August 4th, 1914, something to be interposed for a short time, day by day, between a mind tormented and obsessed by the spectacle of war and the terrible reality it could not otherwise forget. To take up one's pen and lose oneself for a while in memories of life as it was long, long before the war—there was refreshment and renewal in that! Once—last spring—I tried to base a novel on a striking war incident which had come my way. Impossible! The zest

and pleasure which for any story-teller goes with the first shaping of a story died away at the very beginning. For the day's respite had gone. The little "wind-warm" space had disappeared. Life and thought were all given up, without mercy or relief, to the fever and nightmare of the war. I fell back upon my early recollections of Oxford thirty, forty years ago—and it was like rain in the desert. So that, in the course of months it had become a habit with me never to *write* about the war; and outside the hours of writing to think and talk of nothing else.

But your letter suddenly roused in me a desire to write about the war. It was partly I think because what you wrote summed up and drove home other criticisms and appeals of the same kind. I had been putting them mechanically aside as not having any special reference to me; but in reality they had haunted me. And now you make a personal appeal. You say that England at the present moment is misunderstood, and even hardly

judged in America, and that even those great newspapers of yours that are most friendly to the Allies are often melancholy reading for those with English sympathies. Our mistakes —real and supposed—loom so large. We are thought to be not taking the war seriously—even now. Drunkenness, strikes, difficulties in recruiting the new armies, the losses of the Dardanelles expedition, the failure to save Serbia and Montenegro, tales of luxurious expenditure in the private life of rich and poor, and of waste or incompetence in military administration—these are made much of, even by our friends, who grieve, while our enemies mock. You say the French case has been on the whole much better presented in America than the English case; and you compare the international situation with those months in 1863 when it was necessary for the Lincoln Government to make strenuous efforts to influence and affect English opinion, which in the case of our upper classes and too many of our leading men was unfavourable or sceptical

towards the North. You who know something of the vastness of the English effort — you urge upon me that English writers whose work and names are familiar to the American public are bound to speak for their country, bound to try and make Americans feel what we here feel through every nerve—that cumulative force of a great nation, which has been slow to rouse, and is now immovably—irrevocably—set upon its purpose. "Tell me," you say in effect, "what in your belief is the real spirit of your people—of your men in the field and at sea, of your workmen and employers at home, your women, your factory workers, your soldiers' wives, your women of the richer and educated classes, your landowners and politicians. Are you yet fully awake—yet fully in earnest, in this crisis of England's fate? 'Weary Titan' that she is, with her age-long history behind her, and her vast responsibilities by sea and land, is she shouldering her load in this incredible war, as she must shoulder it; as her friends — the friends of liberty throughout

the world — pray that she may shoulder it?"

Yes! — I must answer your questions — to the best of my power. I am no practised journalist—the days of my last articles for *The Pall Mall* under the "John Morley" of those days are thirty odd years behind me! But I have some qualifications. Ever since—more than half a century ago—I paid my first childish visit to the House of Commons, and heard Mr. Roebuck, the "Tear 'em" of *Punch's* cartoon, make his violent appeal to the English Government to recognise the belligerency of the South, it would be almost true to say that politics and affairs have been no less interesting to me than literature; and next to English politics, American politics and American opinion; partly because of my early association with men like W. E. Forster, stanch believers, even when Gladstone and John Russell wavered, in the greatness of the American future and the justice of the Northern cause—and partly because of the warm and deep impression left upon me and mine by your successive

Ambassadors in London, by Mr. Lowell above all, by Mr. and Mrs. Phelps, by the John Hays, the Choates and the Bayards—no less than by the many intimate friendships with Americans from different worlds which my books have brought me since 1888. During the last thirty years, also, I have had many friends—and some kinsmen—among the leaders of English politics, and in both political parties. At the present moment my only son is a member of the English House of Commons, and a soldier fighting in the war. All my younger kinsfolk are fighting; the sons of all my friends are fighting; and their daughters are nursing as members of Voluntary Aid Detachments—(marvellous what the girl V. A. D.'s, as England affectionately calls them, have done since the beginning of the war!)—or working week-end shifts to relieve munition workers, or replacing men of military age in the public offices and banks. I live in one of the Home Counties, within five miles of one of the military camps. The small towns near us

are crowded with soldiers; the roads are full of marching infantry, of artillery-trains and supply-wagons. Our village has sent practically all its able-bodied men of military age to the front; the few that remain are "attested" and only waiting to be called up. A great movement, in which this household is engaged, is now beginning to put women on the land, and so replace the agricultural labourers who have gone either into the armies or the munition factories. And meanwhile all the elderly men and women of the countryside are sitting on War Committees, or working for the Red Cross. Our lives are penetrated by the war; our thoughts are never free from it.

But in trying to answer your questions I have gone far beyond my own normal experience. I asked the English Government to give me some special opportunities of seeing what Great Britain is doing in the war, and in matters connected with the war, and they have given them ungrudgingly. I have been allowed to go, through the snow-storms of this bitter

winter, to the far north and visit the Fleet, in those distant waters where it keeps guard night and day over England. I have spent some weeks in the Midlands and the north watching the vast new activity of the Ministry of Munitions throughout the country; and finally in a motor tour of some five hundred miles through the zone of the English armies in France, I have been a spectator not only of that marvellous organisation in northwestern France, of supplies, reinforcements, training camps and hospitals, which England has built up in the course of eighteen months behind her fighting line, but I have been—on the first of two days—within less than a mile of the fighting line itself, and on a second day, from a Flemish hill—with a gas helmet close at hand! I have been able to watch a German counter-attack, after a successful English advance, and have seen the guns flashing from the English lines, and the shell-bursts on the German trenches along the Messines ridge; while in the far distance, a black and jagged ghost, the

tower of the Cloth Hall of Ypres broke fitfully through the mists—bearing mute witness before God and man.

For a woman—a marvellous experience! I hope later on in these letters to describe some of its details, and some of the thoughts awakened by them in a woman's mind. But let me here keep to the main point raised by your question — *the effort of England.* During these two months of strenuous looking and thinking, of conversation with soldiers and sailors and munition workers, of long days spent in the great supply bases across the Channel, or of motoring through the snowy roads of Normandy and Picardy, I have naturally realised that effort far more vividly than ever before. It seems to me—it must seem to any one who has seriously attempted to gauge it—amazing, colossal. "What country has ever raised over sixty per cent of its total recruitable strength, for service beyond the seas in a few months?" asks one of our younger historians; and that a country not invaded,

protected by the sea, and by a supreme fleet; a country, moreover, without any form of compulsory military service, in which soldiering and the soldier have been rather unpopular than popular, a country in love with peace, and with no intention or expectation of going to war with any one?

II

For there we come to the root of everything —the *unpreparedness of England*—and what it meant. It meant simply that as a nation we never wished for war with Germany, and, as a nation, we never expected it. Our Governments, of course, contained men who saw more or less plainly the dangers ahead, and had spent years of effort in trying to avoid them. On several occasions, during the last twenty years, as we all remember, a wave of sudden anxiety as to German aims and intentions had spread through the thinking portion of the nation—in connection with South Africa, with Morocco, with the Balkans. But

it had always died away again. We know now that Germany was not yet ready! Meanwhile fruitless efforts were made by successive English Governments to limit armaments, to promote arbitration, and extend the scope of the Hague Tribunal. In vain. Germany would have none of them. Year by year, in a world of peace her battle-navy grew. "For what can it be intended but to attack England?" said the alarmist. But how few of us believed them! Our Tariff Reformers protested against the encroachments of German trade; but, outside a handful of persons who seemed to most of us fanatics, the emphasis lay always on care for our own people, and not on hostility to Germany. Those who warned us passionately that Germany meant to provoke a struggle, that the struggle must come, were very little heeded. Nobody slept the worse at night for their harangues. Lord Roberts's agitation for National Service, based on the portentous growth of the German Army and Navy, made comparatively little way. I

speak from personal experience of a large Parliamentary division. "Did you foresee it?" I said to one of the ablest and most rising men in the Navy a fortnight ago. He thought a little. "I always felt there might be a clash over some colonial question—a quarrel about black men. But a war between the white nations over a European question—that Germany would force such a war—no, that I never believed!" Nor did any of us—except those few—those very few persons, who Cassandra-like, saw the coming horror plainly, and spoke to a deaf country.

"There was *no* hatred of Germany in this country"—I quote a Cabinet Minister. "Even in those parts of the country which had most reason to feel the trade rivalry of Germany, there was no thought of war, no wish for war!" It came upon England like one of those sudden spates through mountain clefts in spring, that fall with havoc on the plains beneath. After such days of wrestling for European peace as have left their indelible mark upon

every member of the English Cabinet which declared war on August 4th, 1914, we fought because we must, because, in Luther's words, we "could no other."

What is the proof of this—the proof which history will accept as final—against the vain and lying pleas of Germany?

Nothing less than the whole history of the past eighteen months!—beginning with that initial lack of realisation, and those harassing difficulties of organisation with which we are now so often and so ignorantly reproached. At the word "Belgium" on August 4th, practically the whole English nation fell into line. We felt no doubts—we knew what we had to do. But the problem was how to do it. Outside the Navy and the Expeditionary Force, both of them ready to the last gun and button, we had neither men nor equipment equal to the fighting of a Continental war, and we knew it. The fact is more than our justification—it is our glory. If we had meant war, as Germany still hoarsely but more faintly says,

week after week, to a world that listens no longer, could any nation of sane men have behaved as we did in the years before the war? —233,000 men on active service—and 263,000 Territorials, against Germany's millions!—with arsenals and equipment to match. Is it any wonder that the country—our untouched, uninvaded country—safe as it believed itself to be under the protection of its invincible Navy, was, in some sections of our population at any rate, slow to realise the enormous task to which—for the faith of treaties' sake, for self-defence's sake—it was committed?

And yet—was it after all so slow? The day after war was declared the Prime Minister asked Parliament to authorise the addition of half a million of men to the Army, and a first war credit of a hundred millions of money (five hundred million dollars). The first hundred thousand men came rolling up into the great military centres within a few days. By September 4th nearly three hundred thousand fresh men had enlisted—by Christ-

mas half a million. By May, a million men had been added to the new Armies; by September, 1915, Sir John French alone had under his command close on a million men on the lines in France and Flanders, and in December, 1915, the addition of another million men to the Army was voted by Parliament, bringing up the British military strength to approximately four millions, excluding Colonials. And what of the Dominions? By November, 1915, Canada and Australia alone had sent us forces more than equal to the whole of that original Expeditionary Force, that "contemptible little army" which, broken and strained as it was by the sheer weight and fierceness of the German advance, yet held the gates of the Channel till England could fling her fresh troops into the field, and France—admirable France!—had recovered from the first onslaught of her terrible and ruthless enemy.

In one of my later letters I hope to give some particulars of this first rush of men, gathered

from those who witnessed it and took part in it. One remarkable point in connection with it is that those districts most heavily employed in munition-making and coal-mining, the two industries absolutely indispensable to our Army and Navy, have also sent the largest supply of men to the fighting line—take, for instance, Newcastle and the Clyde. There have been anxious episodes, of course, in the great development. Was your own vast levy in the Civil War without them? And for the last half million men, we have had to resort, as Lincoln resorted, to a modified form of compulsion. There was, no doubt, a good deal of unnecessary waste and overlapping in the first camp and billeting organization of the enormous forces raised. But when all is said, did we not, in the language of a French observer "improvise the impossible"?—and have we not good reason to be proud?—not with any foolish vainglory, but with the sober and resolute pride of a great nation, conscious of its past,

determined to correct its mistakes, and looking open-eyed and fearless towards the future?

Then as to munitions: in many ways, as you will perhaps say, and as I agree, a tragic story. If we had possessed last spring the ammunition—both for ourselves and our allies we now possess, the war would have gone differently. Drunkenness, trade-union difficulties, a small—very small—revolutionary element among our work people—all these have made trouble. But the real cause of our shortage lay in the fact that no one, outside Germany, realised till far into the war, what the ammunition needs—the absolutely unprecedented needs—of this struggle were going to be. It was the second Battle of Ypres at the end of April last year which burnt them into the English mind. We paid for the grim knowledge in thousands of our noblest lives. But since then?

In a later letter I propose to draw some picture in detail of the really marvellous movement which since last July, under the impulse

given by Mr. Lloyd George, has covered England with new munition factories and added enormously to the producing power of the old and famous firms, has drawn in an army of women—now reckoned at something over a quarter of a million—and is at this moment not only providing amply for our own armies, but is helping those of the Allies against those final days of settlement with Germany which we believe to be now steadily approaching. American industry and enterprise have helped us substantially in this field of munitions. We are gratefully conscious of it. But England is now fast overtaking her own needs.

More of this presently. Meanwhile to the military and equipment effort of the country, you have to add the financial effort—something like $7,500,000,000, already expended on the war; the organising effort, exemplified in the wonderful "back of the army" in France, which I hope to describe to you; and the vast hospital system, with all its scientific

adjuncts, and its constantly advancing efficiency.

And at the foundation of it all—the human and personal effort!—the lives given for England, the blood so generously shed for her, the homes that have sacrificed their all, our "golden lads" from all quarters and classes, whose young bodies lie mingled with an alien dust that "is for ever England," since they sleep there and hallow it; our mothers who mourn the death or the wreck of the splendid sons they reared; our widowed wives and fatherless children. And this, in a quarrel which only very slowly our people have come to feel as in very deed their own. At first we thought most often and most vividly of Belgium, of the broken treaty, and of France, so wantonly attacked, whose people no English man or woman could ever have looked in the face again, had we forsaken her. Then came the hammer blows that forged our will—Louvain, Aerschot, Rheims, the air-raids on our defenceless towns, the senseless murder of our

women and children, the Bryce report, the *Lusitania,* the execution of Edith Cavell—the whole stupefying revelation of the German hatred and greed towards this country, and of the qualities latent in the German character. Now we *know*—that it is they, or we—since they willed it so. And this old, illogical, unready country is only just arriving at its full strength, only just fully conscious of the sternness of its own resolve, only just putting out its full powers, as the German power is weakening, and the omens are changing—both in East and West.

III

No!—the effort of England during the past eighteen months in spite of all temporary ebbs and difficulties, in spite of that chorus of self-blame in which the English nation delights, has been one of the great things in the history of our country. We have "improvised the impossible" in every direction—*but one.*

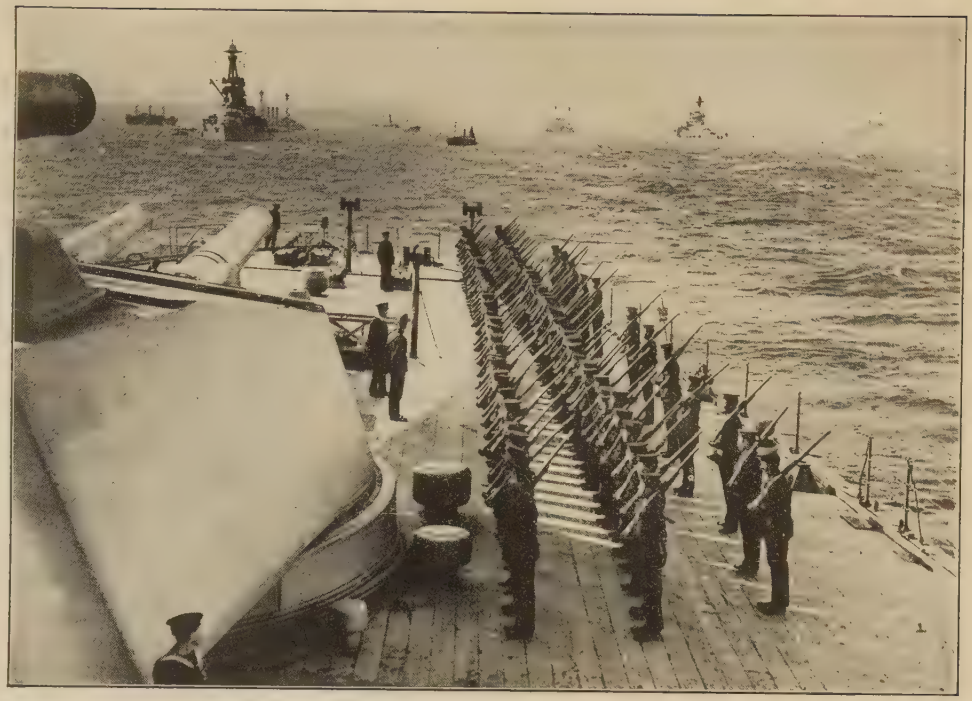
In one point, indeed, there has been no im-

provisation. Nothing was trusted to chance. What is it that alone has secured us the time to make the effort we have made?

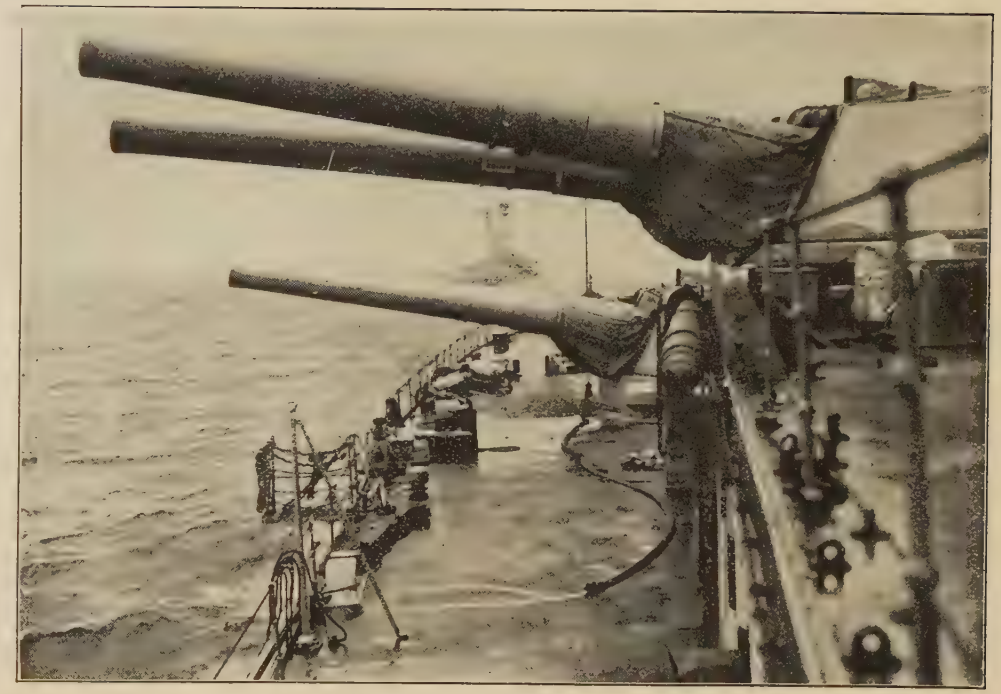
It is now about a month ago that, by permission of the Admiralty, I found myself driving towards a certain pier in a harbour opening on the North Sea. The Commodore of a Cruiser Squadron was to send his boat for me, and I was to lunch with him on board his Flag-ship. I duly passed the distrustful sentry on the road leading to the pier, arrived at the pier-head and descended from the motor which had brought me. The morning was mistily sunny, and the pier strangely deserted. Where was the boat? Where was my friend who had hoped to come for me himself? No signs of either. The few old sailors employed about the pier looked at me in astonishment, and shook their heads when I inquired. Commodore ——'s boat was not there; no boat had been in that morning from the ships. I took the Commodore's letter from my handbag, to assure myself I had not been dream-

ing, and reread it in perplexity. No dates could be clearer—no directions more precise. Suddenly I perceive one tall naval officer on the pier. "Can you help me, sir?" And I hand him the Commodore's letter. He looks at me—and at the letter. His face twinkles with repressed laughter; and I laugh, too, beginning to understand. "Very sorry," says the charming young man, "but I think I can assure you there will be no boat, and it is no use your waiting. Commodore —— went to sea last night."

I thanked him, and we laughed together. Then I walked up the pier a little way, seeing a movement in the mist. A sailor came up to me. "They all went to sea last night," he said in my ear—"and there are the slow ones coming back!" And out of the mist came the black shapes of war-ships, moving majestically up the harbour—one might have fancied, with a kind of injured dignity, because their unreasonable fellows had been faster and had gone farther afield than they.



Marines Drilling on the Quarterdeck of a British Battleship.



Fifteen-inch Guns on a British Battleship.

I walked back to my motor, disappointed indeed, and yet exulting. It was good to realise personally through this small incident, the mobility and ever-readiness of the Fleet—the absolute insignificance—non-existence even—of any civilian or shore interest, for the Navy at its work. It was not till a week later that I received an amusing and mysterious line from Commodore ——, the most courteous of men.

IV

By the time it reached me, however, I was on the shores of a harbour in the far north "visiting the Fleet," indeed, and on the invitation of England's most famous sailor. Let me be quite modest about it. Not for me the rough waters, or the thunderous gun-practice—

> "Breaking the silence of the seas
> Among the farthest Hebrides"—

which I see described in the letters of the Russian or American journalists who have been allowed to visit the Grand Fleet. There had

been some talk, I understand, of sending me out in a destroyer; it was mercifully abandoned. All the same, I must firmly put on record that mine was "a visit to the Fleet," by Admiralty permission, for the purpose of these letters to you, and through you to the American public, and that I seem to have been so far the only woman who, for newspaper ends, has been allowed to penetrate those mysterious northern limits where I spent two wonderful days.

It was, indeed, a wintry visit. The whole land was covered with snow. The train could hardly drag itself through the choked Highland defiles; and it was hours behind its time when we arrived at a long-expected station, and a Vice-Admiral looking at me with friendly, keen eyes came to the carriage to greet me. "My boat shall meet you at the pier with my Flag-Lieutenant to-morrow morning. You will pick me up at the Flag-ship, and I will take you round the Fleet. You will lunch with me, I hope, afterwards." I

tried to show my grateful sense both of the interest and the humour of the situation. My kind visitor disappeared, and the train carried me on a few miles farther to my destination for the night.

And here I take a few words from a journal written at the time:

It is nearly dawn. A red light in the northeast is coming up over the snowy hills. The water, steely grey—the tide rising. What strange moving bodies are those, scudding along over the dim surface, like the ghosts of sea planes? Dense flocks of duck apparently, rising and falling along the shallows of the shore. Now they are gone. Nothing moves. The morning is calm, and the water still. And on it lie, first a cruiser squadron, and then a line of Dreadnoughts stretching out of sight. No lights anywhere, except the green lights on a hospital ship far away. The great ships lie dark and silent, and I sit and watch them, in the cold dawn, thinking that but for them, and the multitude of their comrades that guard these seas and shores, England would be as Belgium or as Northern France, ravaged and destroyed by a barbarian enemy. My heart goes out to you, great ships, and you, gallant unwearied men, who keep your watch upon them! That watch has been kept for generations. Never has there been such need for it as now. . . .

But the day has risen, and the sun with it. As I leave the shore in the Vice-Admiral's

boat, the sunlight comes dancing over a low line of hill, lighting up the harbour, the mighty ships, with their guns, and, scattered out to sea along the distance, the destroyers, the trawlers, the mine-sweepers, the small auxiliary craft of all kinds—those "fringes of the fleet"—which Kipling has caught and photographed as none but he can.

The barge stops beside the Flag-ship, and the Admiral descends into it. What is the stamp, the peculiar stamp that these naval men bear?—as of a force trained and disciplined to its utmost capacity, and then held lightly in check—till wanted. You see it in so many of their faces, even in eyes hollow for want of sleep. It is always there—the same strength, the same self-control, the same humanity. Is it produced by the testing weight of responsibility, the silent sense of ever-present danger, both from the forces of nature and the enmity of man, the high, scientific training, and last but not least, that marvellous comradeship of the Navy, whether be-

tween officer and officer, or between officers and men, which is constantly present indeed in the Army, but is necessarily closer and more intimate here, in the confined world of the ship, where all live together day after day, and week after week, and where—if disaster comes—all may perish together?

But on this bright winter morning, as we pass under and round the ships, and the Admiral points out what a landswoman can understand, in the equipment and the power of these famous monsters with their pointing guns, there was for the moment no thought of the perils of the Navy, but only of the glory of it. And afterwards in the Admiral's pleasant drawing-room on board the Flag-ship, with its gathering of naval officers, Admirals, Captains, Commanders, how good the talk was! Not a shade of boasting—no mere abuse of Germany—rather a quiet regret for the days when German and English naval men were friends throughout the harbours of the world. "Von Spee was a very good fellow—

I knew him well—and his two sons who went down with him," says an Admiral gently. "I was at Kiel the month before the war. I *know* that many of their men must loathe the work they are set to do." "The point is," says a younger man, broad-shouldered, with the strong face of a leader, "that they are always fouling the seas, and we are always cleaning them up. Let the neutrals understand that! It is not we who strew the open waters with mines for the slaughter of any passing ship, and then call it 'maintaining the freedom of the seas.' And as to their general strategy, their Higher Command—" he throws back his head with a quiet laugh—and I listen to a rapid sketch of what the Germans *might* have done, have never done, and what it is now much too late to do, which I will not repeat.

Type after type comes back to me:—the courteous Flag-Lieutenant, who is always looking after his Admiral, whether in these brief harbour rests, or in the clash and darkness of the high seas—the Lieutenant-Com-

manders whose destroyers are the watch-dogs, the ceaseless protectors, no less than the eyes and ears of the Fleet—the Flag-Captain, who takes me through the great ship, with his vigilant, spare face, and his understanding, kindly talk about his men; many of whom on this Thursday afternoon—the quasi half-holiday of the Fleet when in harbour—are snatching an hour's sleep when and where they can. That sleep-abstinence of the Navy — sleep, controlled, measured out, reduced to a bare minimum, among thousands of men, that we on shore may sleep our fill—look at the signs of it, in the eyes both of these officers, and of the sailors crowding the "liberty" boats, which are just bringing them back from their short two hours' leave on shore!

Another gathering, in the Captain's room, for tea. The talk turns on a certain popular play dealing with naval life, and a Commander describes how the manuscript of it had been brought to him, and how he had revelled in the cutting out of all the sentimentalisms.

Two men in the play—friends—going into action—shake hands with each other "with tears in their eyes." A shout of derisive laughter goes up from the tea-table. But they admit "talking shop" off duty. "That's the difference between us and the Army." And what shop it is! I listen to two young officers, both commanding destroyers, describing—one, his adventures in dirty weather the night before, on patrol duty. "My hat, I thought one moment the ship was on the rocks! You couldn't see a yard for the snow—and the sea —*beastly!*" The other had been on one of Admiral Hood's monitors, when they suddenly loomed out of the mist on the Belgian coast, and the German army marching along the coast road to Dunkirk and Calais marched no more, but lay in broken fragments behind the dunes, or any shelter available, till the flooding of the dikes farther south completed the hopeless defeat which Admiral Hood's guns had begun.

Then the talk ranges round the blockade,

the difficulties and dangers of patrol work, the complaints of neutrals. "America should understand us. Their blockade hit us hard enough in the Civil War. And we are fighting for their ideals no less than our own. When has our naval supremacy ever hurt them? Mayn't they be glad of it some day? What about a fellow called Monroe!"—so it runs. Then its tone changes insensibly. From a few words dropped I realise with a start where these pleasantly chatting men had probably been only two or three days before, where they would probably be again on the morrow. Some one opens a map, and I listen to talk which, in spite of its official reticence, throws many a light on the vast range of England's naval power, and the number of her ships. "Will *they* come out? When will they come out?" The question runs round the group. Some one tells a story of a German naval prisoner taken not long ago in the North Sea, and of his remark to his captors: "Yes,

we're beaten—we know that—but we'll make it *hell* for you before we give in!"

For that final clash—that Armageddon that all think must come, our sailors wait, not despising their enemy, knowing very well that they—the Fleet—are the pivot of the situation, that without the British Navy, not all the valour of the Allies in France or Russia could win the war, and that with it, Germany's hope of victory is vain. While the Navy lives, England lives, and Germany's vision of a world governed by the ruthless will of the scientific soldier is doomed.

Meanwhile, what has Germany been doing in her shipyards all this time? No one knows, but my hosts are well aware that we shall know some day.

As to England—here is Mr. Balfour moving the Naval Estimates in the House of Commons—the "token votes" which tell nothing that should not be told. But since the war began, says the First Lord, we have added "one million" to the tonnage of the Navy, and we

have *doubled its personnel.* We are adding more every day; for the Admiralty are always "wanting more." We are quite conscious of our defects—in the Air Service first and foremost. But they will be supplied. There is a mighty movement afoot in the workshops of England—an effort which, when all drawbacks are allowed for, has behind it a free people's will.

In my next letter I propose to take you through some of these workshops. "We get the most extraordinary letters from America," writes one of my correspondents, a steel manufacturer in the Midlands. "What do they think we are about?" An American letter is quoted. "So you are still, in England, taking the war lying down?"

Are we? Let us see.

II

Dear H.

In this second letter I am to try and prove to you that England is *not* taking the war "lying down."

Let me then give you some account—an eye-witness's account—of what there is now to be seen by the ordinary intelligent observer in the "Munition Areas," as the public has learned to call them, of England and Scotland. That great spectacle, as it exists to-day—so inspiring in what it immediately suggests of human energy and human ingenuity, so appalling in its wider implications—testifies, in the first instance, to the fierce stiffening of England's resolve to win the war, and to win it at a lessened cost in life and suffering to our men in the field, which ran through the nation, after the second Battle of Ypres, towards the close of April, 1915. That battle, together with the disagreement between Mr. Winston

Churchill and Lord Fisher at the Admiralty, had, as we all know, momentous consequences. The two events brought the national dissatisfaction and disappointment with the general course of the spring fighting to a head. By May 19th the Ministry which had declared the war and so far conducted it, had disappeared; a National or Coalition Ministry, drawn from the leading men of both parties, reigned in its stead. The statement made by Mr. Asquith, as late, alack, as April 20, 1915, that there was "no truth in the statement" that our efforts at the front "were being crippled or at any rate hampered" by want of ammunition, was seen almost immediately, in the bitter light of events, to be due to some fatal misconceptions, or misjudgments, on the part of those informing the Prime Minister, which the nation in its own interests and those of its allies, could only peremptorily sweep away. A new Ministry was created—the Ministry of Munitions, and Mr. Lloyd George was placed at its head.

The work that Mr. Lloyd George and his Ministry—now employing vast new buildings, and a staff running into thousands—have done since June, 1915, is nothing less than colossal. Much no doubt had been done earlier for which the new Ministry has perhaps unjustly got the credit, and not all has been smooth sailing since. One hears, of course, criticism and complaints. What vast and effective stir, for a great end, was ever made in the world without them?

Mr. Lloyd George has incurred a certain amount of unpopularity among the working classes, who formerly adored him. In my belief he has incurred it for the country's sake, and those sections of the working class who have smarted under his criticisms most bitterly will forgive him when the time comes. In his passionate determination to *get the thing done,* he has sometimes let his theme—of the national need, and the insignificance of all things else in comparison with it—carry him into a vehemence which the workmen have resented, and

which foreign or neutral countries have misunderstood.

He found in his path, which was also the nation's path, three great foes—drunkenness, the old envenomed quarrel between employer and employed, and that deep-rooted industrial conservatism of England, which shows itself on the one hand in the trade-union customs and restrictions of the working class, built up, as they hold, through long years, for the protection of their own standards of life, and, on the other, in the slowness of many of the smaller English employers (I am astonished, however, at the notable exceptions everywhere!) to realise new needs and processes, and to adapt themselves to them. Could any one have made such an omelet without breaking a great many eggs? Is it wonderful that the employers have sometimes felt themselves unbearably hustled, sometimes misunderstood, and at other times annoyed, or worried by what seems to them the red tape of the new

Ministry, and its apparent multiplicity of forms and inquiries?

Men accustomed to conduct their own businesses with the usual independence of regulation have been obliged to submit to regulation. Workmen accustomed to defend certain methods of work and certain customs of their trade as matters of life and death have had to see them jeopardised or swept away. The restoration of these methods and customs is solemnly promised them after the war; but meanwhile they become the servants of a public department almost as much under orders as the soldier himself. They are asked to admit unskilled men to the skilled processes over which they have long kept so jealous a guard; above all, they are asked to assent wholesale to the employment of women in trades where women have never been employed before, where it is obvious that their introduction taps an immense reservoir of new labour, and equally obvious that, once let in, they are not going to be easily or wholly dislodged.

Of course, there has been friction and difficulty; nor is it all yet at an end. In the few danger-spots of the country, where heads are hottest, where thousands of the men of most natural weight and influence are away fighting, and where among a small minority hatred of the capitalist deadens national feeling and obscures the national danger, there have been anxious moments during the winter; there may possibly be some anxious moments again.

But, after all, how little it amounts to in comparison with the enormous achievement! It took us nine months to realise what France —which, remember, is a Continental nation under conscription—had realised after the Battle of the Marne, when she set every hand in the country to work at munitions that could be set to work. With us, whose villages were unravaged, whose normal life was untouched, realisation was inevitably slower. Again we were unprepared, and again, as in the case of the Army itself, we may plead that we have "improvised the impossible." "No nation,"

says Mr. Buchan, "can be adequately prepared, unless, like Germany, it intends war; and Britain, like France paid the penalty of her honest desire for peace!"

Moreover, we had our Navy to work for, without which the cause of the Allies would have gone under, must have gone under, at the first shock of Germany. What the workmen of England did in the first year of the war in her docks and shipyards, history will tell some day.

"What's wrong with the men!" cried a Glasgow employer indignantly to me, one evening as, quite unknown the one to the other, we were nearing one of the towns on the Clyde. "What was done on the Clyde, in the first months of the war, should never be forgotten by this country. Working from six to nine every day till they dropped with fatigue—and Sundays, too—drinking just to keep themselves going—too tired to eat or sleep—that's what it was—I saw it!"

I, too, have seen that utter fatigue stamped

on a certain percentage of faces through the Midlands, or the districts of the Tyne and the Clyde—fatigue which is yet indomitable, which never gives way. How fresh, beside that look, are the faces of the women, for whom workshop life is new! In its presence one forgets all hostile criticism, all talk of strikes and drink, of trade-union difficulties, and the endless worries of the employers.

The English workman is not tractable material—far from it—and he is not imaginative; except in the persons of some of his chosen leaders, he has never seen a ruined French or Flemish village, and he was slow to realise the bitterness of that silence of the guns on the front, when ammunition runs short, and lives must pay. But he has sent his hundreds of thousands to the fighting line; there are a million and a half of him now working at munitions, and it is he, in a comradeship with the brain workers, the scientific intelligence of the nation, closer than any he has yet known, and lately, with the new and aston-

ishing help of women—it is he, after all, who is "delivering the goods," he who is now piling the great arsenals and private works with guns and shells, with bombs, rifles, and machine-guns, he who is working night and day in the shipyards, he who is teaching the rising army of women their work, and making new and firm friends, through the national emergency, whether in the trenches or the workshops, with other classes and types in the nation, hitherto little known to him, to whom he, too, is perhaps a revelation.

There will be a new wind blowing through England when this war is done. Not only will the scientific intelligence, the general education, and the industrial plant of the nation have gained enormously from this huge impetus of war; but men and women, employers and employed, shaken perforce out of their old grooves, will look at each other surely with new eyes, in a world which has not been steeped for nothing in effort and sacrifice, in common griefs and a common passion of will.

II

All over England, then, the same quadruple process has now been going on for months:

The steady enlargement of existing armament and munition works, national or private.

The transformation of a host of other engineering businesses into munition works.

The co-ordination of a vast number of small workshops dealing with the innumerable metal industries of ordinary commerce, so as to make them feed the larger engineering works, with all those minor parts of the gun or shell, which such shops had the power to make.

The putting up of entirely new workshops —National Workshops—directly controlled by the new Ministry, under the Munitions Acts.

Let me take you through a few typical scenes.

It was on February 1st, the day after the Zeppelin raid of January 31st, that I left a house in the north where I had been seeing one of the country-house convalescent hospitals, to

which Englishwomen and English wealth are giving themselves everywhere without stint, and made my way by train, through a dark and murky afternoon, towards a Midland town. The news of the raid was so far vague. The newspapers of the morning gave no names or details. I was not aware that I was passing through towns where women and children in back streets had been cruelly and wantonly killed the night before, where a brewery had been bombed, and the windows of a train broken, in order that the German public might be fed on ridiculous lies about the destruction of Liverpool docks and the wrecking of "English industry." "English industry lies in ruins," said the *Hamburger Nachrichten* complacently. Marvellous paper! Just after reading its remarks, I was driving down the streets of the great industrial centre I had come to see—a town which the murderers of the night before would have been glad indeed to hit. As it was, "English industry" seemed tolerably active amid its "ruins." The clumsy

falsehoods of the German official reports and the German newspapers affect me strangely! It is not so much their lack of truth as their lack of the ironic, the satiric sense, which is a certain protection, after all, even amid the tragedy of war. We have a tolerable British conceit of ourselves, no doubt, and in war we make foolish or boasting statements about the future, because, in spite of all our grumbling, we are at bottom a nation of optimists, and apt to see things as we wish. But this sturdy or fatuous lying about the past—the "sinking" of the *Lion,* the "capture" of Fort Vaux, or the "bombardment" of Liverpool docks—is really beyond us. Our sense of ridicule, if nothing else, forbids—the instinct of an old people with an old and humourous literature. These leading articles of the *Hamburger Nachrichten,* the sermons of German pastors, and those amazing manifestoes of German professors, flying straight in the face of historic documents—"scraps of paper"—which are there, none the less, to all time—for us,

these things are only not comic because, to the spiritual eye, they are written in blood. But to return to the "ruins," and this "English industry" which during the last six months has taken on so grim an aspect for Germany.

My guide, an official of the Ministry, stops the motor, and we turn down a newly made road, leading towards a mass of spreading building on the left.

"A year ago," says my companion—"this was all green fields. Now the company is employing, instead of 3,500 work-people, about three times the number, of whom a large proportion are women. Its output has been quadrupled, and the experiment of introducing women has been a complete success."

We pass up a fine oak staircase to the new offices, and I am soon listening to the report of the works superintendent. A spare, powerful man with the eyes of one in whom life burns fast, he leans, his hands in his pockets, against the wall of his office, talking easily and well. He himself has not had a day's

holiday for ten months, never sleeping more than five and a half hours, with the telephone at his bedhead, and waking to instant work when the moment for waking comes. His view of his workmen is critical. It is the view of one consumed with "realisation," face to face with those who don't "realise." "But the raid will do a deal of good," he says cheerfully.

"As to the women!"—he throws up his hands—"they're saving the country. They don't mind what they do. Hours? They work ten and a half or, with overtime, twelve hours a day, seven days a week. At least, that's what they'd like to do. The Government are insisting on one Sunday—or two Sundays—a month off. I don't say they're not right. But the women resent it. *'We're* not tired!' they say. And you look at them! —they're not tired.

"If I go down to the shed and say: 'Girls! —there's a bit of work the Government are pushing for—they say they must have—can you get it done?' Why, they'll stay and get

it done, and then pour out of the works, laughing and singing. I can tell you of a surgical-dressing factory near here, where for nearly a year the women never had a holiday. They simply wouldn't take one. 'And what'll our men at the front do, if we go holiday-making?'

"Last night" (the night of the Zeppelin raid) "the warning came to put out lights. We daren't send them home. They sat in the dark among the machines, singing, 'Keep the home fires burning,' 'Tipperary,' and the like. I tell you, it made one a bit choky to hear them. They were thinking of their sweethearts and husbands I'll be bound!—not of themselves."

In another minute or two we were walking through the new workshops. Often as I have now seen this sight, so new to England, of a great engineering workshop filled with women, it stirs me at the twentieth time little less than it did at first. These girls and women of the Midlands and the north, are a young and comely race. Their slight or rounded figures

among the forest of machines, the fair or golden hair of so many of them, their grace of movement, bring a strange touch of beauty into a scene which has already its own spell.

Muirhead Bone and Joseph Pennell have shown us what can be done in art with these high workshops, with their intricate distances and the endless crisscross of their belting, and their ranged machines. But the coming in of the girls, in their close khaki caps and overalls, showing the many pretty heads and slender necks, and the rows of light bending forms, spaced in order beside their furnaces or lathes as far as the eye can reach, has added a new element—something flower-like, to all this flash of fire and steel, and to the grimness of war underlying it.

For the final meaning of it all is neither soft nor feminine! These girls—at hot haste—are making fuses and cartridge-cases by the hundred thousand, casting, pressing, drawing, and, in the special danger-buildings, filling certain parts of the fuse with explosive. There

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were about 4,000 of them to 5,000 men, when I saw the shop, and their number has no doubt increased since; for the latest figures show that about 15,000 fresh women workers are going into the munition works every week. The men are steadily training them, and without the teaching and co-operation of the men—without, that is, the surrender by the men of some of their most cherished trade customs—the whole movement would have been impossible.

As it is, by the sheer body of work the women have brought in, by the deftness, energy, and enthusiasm they throw into the simpler but quite indispensable processes, thereby setting the unskilled man free for the Army, and the skilled man for work which women cannot do, Great Britain has become possessed of new and vast resources of which she scarcely dreamed a year ago; and so far as this war is a war of machinery—and we all know what Germany's arsenals have done to make it so—its whole aspect is now changing for us. The "eternal feminine" has made one more start-

ling incursion upon the normal web of things!

But on the "dilution" of labour, the burning question of the hour, I shall have something to say in my next letter. Let me record another visit of the same day to a small-arms factory of importance. Not many women here so far, though the number is increasing, but look at the expansion figures since last summer! A large, new factory added, on a bare field; 40,000 tons of excavation removed, two miles of new shops, sixty feet wide and four floors high, the output in rifles quadrupled, and so on.

We climbed to the top floor of the new buildings and looked far and wide over the town. Dotted over the tall roofs rose the national flags, marking "controlled" factories, *i. e.,* factories still given over a year ago to one or other of the miscellaneous metal trades of the Midlands, and now making fuse or shell for England's Armies, and under the control of the British Government. One had a sudden sharp sense of the town's corporate life,

and of the spirit working in it everywhere for England's victory. Before we descended, we watched the testing of a particular gun. I was to hear its note on the actual battle-field a month later.

An afternoon train takes me on to another great town, with some very ancient institutions, which have done very modern service in the war. I spent my evening in talking with my host, a steel manufacturer identified with the life of the city, but serving also on one of the central committees of the Ministry in London. Labour and politics, the chances of the war, America and American feeling towards us, the task of the new Minister of Munitions, the temper of English and Scotch workmen, the flux into which all manufacturing conditions have been thrown by the war, and how far old landmarks can be restored after it—we talked hard on these and many other topics, till I must break it off—unwillingly!—to get some sleep and write some notes.

Next day took me deep into the very central current of "England's Effort"—so far as this great phase of it at any rate is concerned. In this town, even more than in the city I had just left, one felt the throb of the nation's rising power, concentrated, orderly, determined. Every single engineering business in a town of engineers was working for the war. Every manufacturer of any importance was doing his best for the Government, some in connection with the new Ministry, some with the Admiralty, some with the War Office. As for the leading firms of the city, the record of growth, of a mounting energy by day and night, was nothing short of bewildering. Take these few impressions of a long day, as they come back to me.

First, a great steel warehouse, full of raw steel of many sorts and kinds, bayonet steel, rifle steel, shell steel, stacked in every available corner and against every possible wall—all sold, every bit of it, and ready to be shipped —some to the Colonies, some to our Allies,

with peremptory orders coming in as to which the harassed head of the firm could only shake his head with a despairing "impossible!"

Then some hours in a famous works, under the guidance of the managing director, one of those men, shrewd, indefatigable, humane, in whose company one learns what it is, in spite of all our supposed deficiencies, that makes the secret of England's industrial tenacity. An elderly Scotchman, very plainly marked by the labour and strain of the preceding eighteen months, but still steadily keeping his head and his temper, showing the signs of an Evangelical tradition in his strong dislike for Sunday work, his evident care for his work-people—men and women—and his just and sympathetic tone towards the labour with which he has to deal—such is my companion.

He has a wonderful story to tell: "In September, 1914, we were called upon to manufacture a large extra number of field-guns. We had neither buildings nor machinery for the order. However, we set to work. We

took down seven dwelling-houses; in three weeks we were whitewashing the walls of our new workshop and laying in the machinery. My idea was to make so many guns. The Government asked for four times as many. So we took down more houses, and built another much larger shop. The work was finished in ten weeks. Five other large workshops were put up last year, all built with lightning speed, and everywhere additions have been made to the machinery in every department wherever it was possible to put machines."

As to their thousands of workmen, Mr. C. has no complaints to make.

"They have been steadily working anything from 60 to 80 hours per week; the average is 64.29 hours per week, and the average time lost only 3.51 per cent. A little while ago, a certain union put forward a claim for an advance in wages. We had to decline it, but as the meeting came to an end, the trade-union secretary said:

" 'Of course, we are disappointed, and we shall no doubt return to the matter again. But whether you concède the advance of wages or not, our members will continue to do their level best, believing that they are not only working for themselves, but helping the Government and helping our soldiers to wage this war to a successful conclusion.' "

And the manager adds his belief that this is the spirit which prevails "among the workpeople generally."

Before we plunge into the main works, however, my guide takes me to see a recent venture, organised since the war, in which he clearly takes a special interest. An old warehouse bought, so to speak, overnight, and equipped next morning, has been turned into a small workshop for shell production—employing between three and four hundred girls, with the number of skilled men necessary to keep the new unskilled labour going. These girls are working on the eight hours' shift system; and working so well that a not uncom-

mon wage among them—on piece-work, of course—runs to somewhere between two and three pounds a week.

"But there is much more than money in it," says the kind-faced woman superintendent, as we step into her little office out of the noise, to talk a little. "The girls are perfectly aware that they are 'doing their bit,' that they are standing by their men in the trenches."

This testimony indeed is universal. There is patriotism in this grim work, and affection, and a new and honourable self-consciousness. Girls and women look up and smile as a visitor passes. They presume that he or she is there for some useful purpose connected with the war, and their expression seems to say: "Yes, we are all in it!—we know very well what *we* are doing, and what a difference we are making. Go and tell our boys . . ."

The interest of this workshop lay, of course, in the fact that it was a sample of innumerable others, as quickly organised and as efficiently worked, now spreading over the Midlands and

the north. As to the main works belonging to the same great firm, such things have been often described; but one sees them to-day with new eyes, as part of a struggle which is one with the very life of England. Acres and acres of ground covered by huge workshops new and old, by interlacing railway lines and moving trolleys. Gone is all the vast miscellaneous engineering work of peace. The war has swallowed everything.

I have a vision of a great building, where huge naval guns are being lowered from the annealing furnace above into the hardening oil-tank below, or where in the depths of a great pit, with lights and men moving at the bottom, I see as I stoop over the edge, a jacket being shrunk upon another similar monster, hanging perpendicularly below me.

Close by are the forging-shops whence come the howitzers and the huge naval shells. Watch the giant pincers that lift the red-hot ingots and drop them into the stamping presses. Man directs; but one might think

the tools themselves intelligent, like those golden automata of old that Hephæstus made, to run and wait upon the gods of Olympus. Down drops the punch. There is a burst of flame, as though the molten steel rebelled, and out comes the shell or the howitzer in the rough, nosed and hollowed, and ready for the turning.

The men here are great, powerful fellows, blanched with heat and labour; amid the flame and smoke of the forges one sees them as typical figures in the national struggle, linked to those Dreadnoughts in the North Sea, and to those lines in Flanders and Picardy where Britain holds her enemy at bay. Everywhere the same intensity of effort, whether in the men or in those directing them. And what delicate and responsible processes!

In the next shop, with its rows of shining guns, I stop to look at a great gun apparently turning itself. No workman is visible for the moment. The process goes on automatically, the bright steel emerging under the tool that

here, too, seems alive. Close to it is a man winding steel wire, or rather braid, on a 15-inch gun; beyond again there are workmen and inspectors testing and gauging another similar giant. Look down this shining tube and watch the gauging, now with callipers, now with a rubber device which takes the impression of the rifling and reveals any defect. The gauging turns upon the ten-thousandth part of an inch, and any mistake or flaw may mean the lives of men. . . .

We turn out into a pale sunshine. The morning work is over, and the men are trooping into the canteens for dinner—and we look in a moment to see for ourselves how good a meal it is. At luncheon, afterwards, in the Directors' Offices, I am able to talk with the leading citizens of the great town.

One of them writes some careful notes for me. Their report of labour conditions is excellent. "No organised strikes and few cessations of work to report. Overtime is being freely worked. Little or no drunkenness, and

that at a time when the average earnings of many classes of workmen are two or three times above the normal level. The methods introduced in the twenty years before the war —conference and discussion—have practically settled all difficulties between employers and employed, in these parts at any rate, during this time of England's trial."

After luncheon we diverge to pay another all too brief visit to a well-known firm. The managing director gives me some wonderful figures of a new shell factory they are just putting up. It was begun in September, 1915. Since then 2,000 tons of steelwork has been erected, and 200 out of 1,200 machines required have been received and fixed. Four thousand to 5,000 hands will be ultimately employed.

All the actual production off the machines *will be done by women*—and this, although the works are intended for a heavy class of shell, 60-pounder high explosive. Women are already showing their capacity—helped by me-

chanical devices—to deal with this large type of shell; and the workshop when in full working order is intended for an output of a million shell per annum.

I drive on, overshadowed by these figures. *"Per annum!"* The little common words haunt the ear intolerably. Surely before one more year is over, this horror under which we live will be lifted from Europe! Britain, a victorious Britain, will be at peace, and women's hands will have something else to do than making high-explosive shell. But, meanwhile, there is no other way. The country's call has gone out, clear and stern, and her daughters are coming in their thousands to meet it, from loom and house and shop.

A little later, in a great board-room, I find the Munitions Committee gathered. Its function, of course, is to help the new Ministry in organising the war work of the town. In the case of the larger firms, the committee has been chiefly busy in trying to replace labour withdrawn by the war. It has been getting

skilled men back from the trenches, and advising the Ministry as to the "badging" of munition workers. It has itself, through its command of certain scientific workshops, been manufacturing gauges and testing materials.

It has turned the electroplate workshops of the town on to making steel helmets, and in general has been "working in" the smaller engineering concerns so as to make them feed the larger ones. This process here, as everywhere, is a very educating one. The shops employed on bicycle and ordinary motor work have, as a rule, little idea of the extreme accuracy required in munition work. The idea of working to the thousandth of an inch seems to them absurd; but they have to learn to work to the ten-thousandth, and beyond! The war will leave behind it greatly raised standards of work in England!—that every one agrees.

And I carry away with me as a last remembrance of this great town and its activities two recollections—one of a university man doing some highly skilled work on a particularly fine

gauge: "If you ask me what I have been doing for the last few weeks, I can only tell you that I have been working like a nigger and have done nothing! Patience!—that's all there is to say." And another of a "transformed" shop of moderate size, where an active and able man, after giving up the whole of his ordinary business, has thrown himself into the provision, within his powers, of the most pressing war needs, as he came across them.

In July last year, for instance, munitions work in many quarters was actually held up for want of gauges. Mr. D. made something like 10,000, to the great assistance of certain new Government shops. Then the Government asked for a particular kind of gun. Mr. D. undertook 1,000, and has already delivered 400. Tools for shell-making are *everywhere* wanted in the rush of the huge demand. Mr. D. has been making them diligently. This is just one example among hundreds of how a great industry is adapting itself to the fiery needs of war.

But the dark has come, and I must catch my train. As I speed through a vast industrial district I find in the evening papers hideous details of the Zeppelin raid, which give a peculiar passion and poignancy to my recollections of a crowded day—and peculiar interest, also, to the talk of an able representative of the Ministry of Munitions, who is travelling with me, and endeavouring to give me a connected view of the whole new organisation. As he speaks, my thoughts travel to the English battle-line, to the trenches and casualty clearing-stations behind it, to distant Russia; and I think of the Prime Minister's statement in Parliament—that the supply of munitions, for all its marvellous increase, is not yet equal to the demand. New shops, new workers, new efforts—England is producing them now unceasingly, she must go on producing them. There must be no pause or slackening. There will be none.

I am going now to see—after the Midlands

—what the English and Scotch north is doing to swell the stream. And in my next letter there will be plenty to say about "Dilution" of labour, about wages, and drink, and some other burning topics of the moment.

III

DEAR H.

It is now three months since Mr. Lloyd George made his startling speech, as Munitions Minister, in the House of Commons in which, as he wound up his review of his new department, he declared: "Unless we quicken our movements, damnation will fall on the sacred cause for which so much gallant blood has flowed!" The passion of this peroration was like the fret of a river in flood chafing at some obstacle in its course. Generally speaking, the obstacle gives way. In this case Mr. George's obstacle had begun to give way long before December 21st—the date of the speech. The flood had been pushing at it with increasing force since the foundation of the Ministry of Munitions in the preceding summer. But the crumbling process was not quick enough for Great Britain's needs, or for the energy of her Minister.

Hence the outspoken speech of December 21st, supported by Mr. Asquith's grave words of a few weeks later. "We cannot go on," said the Prime Minister in effect, "depending upon foreign countries for our munitions. We haven't the ships to spare to bring them home, and the cost is too great. We *must* make them ourselves." "Yes—and *quicker!*" Mr. Lloyd George had already said, with a sharp emphasis, meant to "hustle" that portion of the nation which still required hustling; overpainting his picture, no doubt, but with quite legitimate rhetoric, in order to produce his effect.

The result of that fresh "hustling" was the appointment of the Dilution Commissioners, a second Munitions Act amending the first, and a vast expansion all over the country of the organisation which had seemed so vast before. It was not till midwinter, in the very midst of the new and immense effort I have been describing, that the Minister of Munitions and those working with him convinced themselves that, without another resolute push, the bar-

rier across the stream of the nation's will might still fatally hold it back. More and more men were wanted every week—in the Army and the workshops—and there were not men to go round. The second push had to be given—it was given—and it still firmly persists.

In the spring of 1915, the executives of the leading trade-unions had promised the Government the relaxation of their trade rules for the period of the war. Many of the trade-union leaders—Mr. Barnes, Mr. Henderson, Mr. Hodge, and many others—have worked magnificently in this sense, and many unions have been thoroughly loyal throughout their ranks to the pledge given in their name. The iron-moulders, the shipwrights, the brassworkers may be specially mentioned. But in the trades mostly concerned with ammunition, there were certain places and areas where the men themselves, as distinct from their responsible leaders, offered a dogged, though often disguised resistance. Personally, I think that any one at all accustomed to try and look at

labour questions from the point of view of labour will understand the men while heartily sympathising with the Minister, who was determined to get "the goods" and has succeeded in getting them. Here, in talking of "the men" I except that small revolutionary element among them which has no country, and exists in all countries. And I except, too, instances which certainly are to be found, though rarely, of what one might call a purely mean and overreaching temper on the part of workmen—taking advantage of the nation's need, as some of the less responsible employers have no doubt, also, taken advantage of it. But, in general, it seems to me, there has been an honest struggle in the minds of thousands of workmen between what appears to them the necessary protection of their standards of life —laboriously attained through long effort— and the call of the war. And that the overwhelming majority of the workmen concerned with munitions should have patriotically and triumphantly decided this struggle as they

have—under pressure, no doubt, but under no such pressure as exists in a conscripted, still more in an invaded, nation—may rank, I think, when all is said, with the raising of our voluntary Armies as another striking chapter in the book of *England's Effort.*

In this chapter, then, Dilution will always take a leading place.

What is Dilution?

It means, of course, that under the sharp analysis of necessity much engineering work, generally reckoned as "skilled" work, and reserved to "skilled" workmen, by a number of union regulations, is seen to be capable of solution into various processes, some of which can be sorted out from the others as within the capacity of the unskilled or semiskilled worker. By so dividing them up, and using the superior labour with economy, only where it is really necessary, it can be made to go infinitely further; and the inferior or untrained labour can then be brought into work where

nobody supposed it could be used, where, in fact, it never has been used.

Obvious enough, perhaps. But the idea had to be applied in haste to living people—employers, many of whom shrank from reorganising their workshops and changing all their methods at a moment's notice; and workmen looking forward with consternation to being outnumbered, by ten to one, in their own workshops, by women. When I was in the Midlands and the North, at the end of January and in early February, Dilution was still an unsettled question in some of the most important districts. One of the greatest employers in the country writes to me to-day (March 24): "Since January, we have passed through several critical moments, but, eventually, the principle was accepted, and Dilution is being introduced as fast as convenient. For this we have largely to thank an admirable Commission (Sir Croydon Marks, Mr. Barnes, and Mr. Shackleton) which was sent down to interview employers and employed.

Their tact and acumen were remarkable. Speaking personally, I cannot help believing that there is a better understanding between masters and men now than has existed in my memory."

A great achievement that!—for both employers and employed—for the Minister also who appointed the Commission and thus set the huge stone rolling yet another leap upon its way.

It will be readily seen how much depends also on the tact of the individual employer. That employer has constantly done best who has called his men into council with him, and thrown himself on their patriotism and good sense. I take the following passage from an interesting report by a very shrewd observer,* printed in one of the northern newspapers. It describes an employer as saying:

I was told by the Ministry that I should have to double my output. Labour was scarce and I consulted a deputation of the men about it. I told them the problem and said I should be glad of suggestions. I told them that

* *Yorkshire Observer,* February 1, 1916.

we should either have to get men or women, and I asked them for their co-operation, as there would be a great deal of teaching to be done. "Probably," I said, "you would like to find the men?" They agreed to try. I gave them a week, and at the end of a week they came to me and said they would rather have women. I said to them: "Then you must all pull together." They gave me their word. Right from the beginning they have done their level best to help, and things have gone on perfectly. On one occasion, a woman complained that the man directing her was "working against her." I called the men's committee together, said the employer. I told them the facts, and they have dealt with the offender themselves.

The general system now followed in the shell factories is to put so many skilled men in charge of so many lathes worked by women workers. Each skilled man, who teaches the women, sets the tools, and keeps the machines in running order, oversees eight, ten, or more machines. But sometimes the comradeship is much closer. For instance (I quote again the witness mentioned above), in a machine tool shop, *i. e.,* a shop for the making of tools used in shell production, one of the most highly skilled parts of the business, you may now see

a man, with a woman to help him, operating two lathes. If the woman falls into any difficulty the man comes to help her. Both can earn more money than each could earn separately, and the skilled man who formerly worked the second lathe is released. In the same shop a woman watched a skilled man doing slot-drilling—a process in which thousandths of an inch matter—for a fortnight. Now she runs the machine herself by day, while the man works it on the night shift. One woman in this shop is "able to do her own tool-setting." The observer thinks she must be the only woman tool-setter in the country, and he drops the remark that her capacity and will may have something to do with the fact that she has a husband at the front! Near by, as part of the same works, which are not specialised, but engaged in *general* engineering, is a bomb shop staffed by women, which is now sending 3,000 bombs a week to the trenches. Women are also doing gun-breech work of the most delicate and responsible kind under

the guidance of a skilled overseer. One of the women at this work was formerly a charwoman. She has never yet broken a tool. All over the works, indeed, the labour of women and unskilled men is being utilised in the same scientific way. Thus the area of the works has been doubled in a few months, without the engagement of a single additional skilled man from outside. "We have made the men take an interest in the women," say the employers. "That is the secret of our success. We care nothing at all about the money, we are all for the output. If the men think you are going to exploit women and cheapen the work, the scheme is crabbed right away."

I myself came across the effect of this suspicion in the minds of the workmen in the case of a large Yorkshire shell factory, where the employers at once detected and slew it. This great workshop, formerly used for railway work, now employs some 1,300 women, with a small staff of skilled men. The women work forty-five hours a week in eight-hour

shifts—the men fifty-three hours on twelve-hour shifts. There is no difficulty whatever in obtaining a full supply of women's labour —indeed, the factory has now a waiting-list of 500. Nor has there been any difficulty with the men in regard to the women's work. With the exception of two operations, which are thought too heavy for them, all the machines are run by women.

But when the factory began, the employers very soon detected that it was running below its possible output. There was a curious lack of briskness in the work—a curious constraint among the new workers. Yet the employers were certain that the women were keen, and their labour potentially efficient. They put their heads together, and posted up a notice in the factory to the effect that whatever might be the increase in the output of piece-work, the piece-work rate would not be altered. Instantly the atmosphere began to clear, the pace of the machines began to mount.

It was a factory in which the work was new,

the introduction of women was new, and the workers strange to each other, and for the most part strange to their employers. A small leaven of distrust on the part of the men workers was enough, and the women were soon influenced. Luckily, the mischief was as quickly scotched. Men and women began to do their best, the output of the factory—which had been planned for 14,000 shells a week—ran up to 20,000, and everything has gone smoothly since.

Let me now, however, describe another effect of Dilution—the employment of unskilled *men* on operations hitherto included in skilled engineering.

On the day after the factory I have just described, my journey took me to another town close by, where my guide—a Director of one of the largest and best-known steel and engineering works in the kingdom—showed me a new shell factory filled with 800 to 900 men, all "medically unfit" for the Army, and almost all drawn from the small trades and pro-

fessions of the town, especially from those which had been hard hit by the war. Among those I talked to I found a keeper of bathing-machines, a publican's assistant, clerks, shop assistants, three clergy — these latter going home for their Sunday duty, and giving their wages to the Red Cross—unemployed architects, and the like.

I cannot recall any shop which made a greater impression of energy, of a spirit behind the work, than this shop. In its inspecting-room I found a graduate from Yale. "I had to join in the fight," he said quietly—"this was the best way I could think of." And it was noticeable besides for some remarkable machines, which your country had also sent us.

In other shell factories a single lathe carries through one process, interminably repeated, sometimes two, possibly three. But here, with the exception of the fixing and drilling of the copper band, and a few minor operations, one lathe *made the shell* — cut, bored, roughed, turned, nosed, and threaded it, so that it

dropped out, all but the finished thing—minus, of course, the fuse. The steel pole introduced at the beginning of the process made nine shells, and the average time per shell was twenty-three minutes. No wonder that in the great warehouse adjoining the workshop one saw the shell heaps piling up in their tens of thousands—only to be rushed off week by week, incessantly, to the front. The introduction of these machines had been largely the work of an able Irish manager, who described to me the intense anxiety with which he had watched their first putting up and testing, lest the vast expenditure incurred should have been in any degree thrown away. His cheerful looks and the shell warehouse told the sequel. When I next met him it was at a northern station in company with his Director. They were then apparently in search of new machinery! The workshop I had seen was being given over to women, and the men were moving on to heavier work. And this is the kind of process which is going on

over the length and breadth of industrial England.

So far, however, I have described the expansion or adaptation of firms already existing. But the country is now being covered with another and new type of workshop—the National Shell factories—which are founded, financed, and run by the Ministry of Munitions. The English Government is now by far the greatest engineering employer in the world.

Let me take an illustration from a Yorkshire town—a town where this Government engineering is rapidly absorbing everything but the textile factories. A young and most competent Engineer officer is the Government head of the factory. The work was begun last July, by the help of borrowed lathes, in a building which had been used for painting railway-carriages; its first shell was completed last August. The staff last June was 1. It is now about 200, and the employees nearly 2,500.

A month after the first factory was opened, the Government asked for another—for larger

shell. It was begun in August, and was in work in a few weeks. In September a still larger factory—for still larger shells—(how these demands illustrate the course of the war! —how they are themselves illustrated by the history of Verdun!) was seen to be necessary. It was begun in September, and is now running. Almost all the machines used in the factory have been made in the town itself, and about 100 small firms, making shell parts—fuses, primers, gaines, etc.—have been grouped round the main firm, and are every day sending in their work to the factory to be tested, put together, and delivered.

No factory made a better impression upon me than this one. The large, airy building with its cheerful lighting; the girls in their dark-blue caps and overalls, their long and comely lines reminding one of some processional effect in a Florentine picture; the high proportion of good looks, even of delicate beauty, among them; the upper galleries with their tables piled with glittering brasswork,

amid which move the quick, trained hands of the women—if one could have forgotten for a moment the meaning of it all, one might have applied to it Carlyle's description of a great school, as "a temple of industrious peace."

Some day, perhaps, this "new industry"—as our ancestors talked of a "new learning"—this swift, astonishing development of industrial faculty among our people, especially among our women, will bear other and rich fruit for England under a cleared sky. It is impossible that it should pass by without effect, profound effect upon our national life. But at present it has one meaning and one only—*war!*

Talk to these girls and women. This woman has lost her son—that one her husband. This one has a brother home on leave, and is rejoicing in the return of her husband from the trenches, as a skilled man, indispensable in the shop; another has friends in the places and among the people which suffered in the last Zeppelin raid. She speaks of it with tight lips. Was it she who chalked the inscription found

by the Lady Superintendent on a lathe some nights ago—"*Done fourteen to-day. Beat that if you can, you devils!*"

No! — under this fast-spreading industry, with its suggestion of good management and high wages, there is the beat of no ordinary impulse. Some feel it much more than others; but, says the clever and kindly Superintendent I have already quoted: "The majority are very decidedly working from the point of view of doing something for their country. . . . A great many of the fuse women are earning for the first time. . . . The more I see of them all, the better I like them." And then follow some interesting comments on the relation of the more educated and refined women among them to the skilled mechanics—two national types that have perhaps never met in such close working contact before. One's thoughts begin to follow out some of the possible social results of this national movement.

A Forest of Shells in a Corner of One of England's Great Shell Filling Factories.

A Light Railway Bringing Up Ammunition.

II

But now the Midlands and the Yorkshire towns are behind me. The train hurries on through a sunny afternoon, and I look through some notes sent me by an expert in the great campaign. Some of them represent its humours. Here is a perfectly true story, which shows an Englishman with "a move on," not unworthy of your side of the water.

A father and son, both men of tremendous energy, were the chiefs of a very large factory, which had been already extensively added to. The father lived in a house alongside the works. One day business took him into the neighbouring county, whilst the son came up to London on munition work. On the father's return he was astonished to see a furniture van removing the contents of his house. The son emerged. He had already signed a contract for a new factory on the site of his father's house; the materials of the house were sold and the furniture half gone. After a first start, the father

took it in true Yorkshire fashion—wasting no words, and apparently proud of his son!

Here we are at last, in the true north—crossing a river, with a climbing town beyond, its tiled roofs wreathed in smoke, through which the afternoon lights are playing. I am carried off to a friend's house. Some directors of the great works I am come to see look in to make a kindly plan for the morrow, and in the evening, I find myself sitting next one of the most illustrious of modern inventors, with that touch of *dream* in manner and look which so often goes with scientific discovery. The invention of this gentle and courteous man has affected every vessel of any size afloat, whether for war or trade, and the whole electrical development of the world. The fact was to be driven home even to my feminine ignorance of mechanics when, a fortnight later, the captain of a Flagship and I were hanging over the huge shaft leading down to the engine-rooms of the Super-dreadnought, and my companion was explaining to me something of the driving power of

the ship. But on this first meeting, how much I might have asked of the kind, great man beside me, and was too preoccupied to ask! May the opportunity be retrieved some day! My head was really full of the overwhelming facts, whether of labour or of output, relating to this world-famous place, which were being discussed around me. I do not name the place, because the banishment of names, whether of persons or places, has been part of the plan of these articles. But one can no more disguise it by writing round it than one could disguise Windsor Castle by any description that was not ridiculous. Many a German officer has walked through these works, I imagine, before the war, smoking the cigarette of peace with their Directors, and inwardly ruminating strange thoughts. If any such comes across these few lines, what I have written will, I think, do England no harm.

But here are some of the figures that can be given. The shop area of the ammunition shops alone has been increased *eightfold* since the

outbreak of war. The total weight of shell delivered during 1915 was—in tons—fourteen times as much as that of 1914. The weight of shell delivered per week, as between December, 1914, and December, 1915, has risen nearly ten times. The number of work-people, in these shops, men and women, had risen (*a*) as compared with the month in which war broke out, to a figure eight times as great; (*b*) as compared with December, 1914, to one between three and four times as great. And over the whole vast enterprise, shipyards, gun shops, ammunition shops, with all kinds of naval and other machinery used in war, the numbers of work-people employed had increased since 1913 more than 200 per cent. They, with their families, equal the population of a great city—you may see a new town rising to meet their needs on the farther side of the river.

As to Dilution, it is now accepted by the men, who said when it was proposed to them: "Why didn't you come to us six months ago?"

And it is working wonders here as elsewhere.

For instance, a particular portion of the breech mechanism of a gun used to take one hour and twenty minutes to make. On the Dilution plan it is done on a capstan, and takes six minutes. Where 500 women were employed before the war, there are now close on 9,000, and there will be thousands more, requiring one skilled man as tool-setter to about nine or ten women. In a great gun-carriage shop, "what used to be done in two years is now done in one month." In another, two tons of brass were used before the war; a common figure now is twenty-one. A large milling shop, now entirely worked by men, is to be given up immediately to women. And so on.

Dilution, it seems to me, is breaking down a number of labour conventions which no longer answer to the real conditions of the engineering trades. The pressure of the war is doing a real service to both employers and employed by the simplification and overhauling it is everywhere bringing about.

As to the problem of what is to be done with

the women after the war, one may safely leave it to the future. It is probably bound up with that other problem of the great new workshops springing up everywhere, and the huge new plants laid down. One thinks of the rapid recovery of French trade after the war of 1870, and of the far more rapid rate—after forty years of machine and transport development, at which the industry of the Allied countries may possibly recover the ravages of the present war, when once peace is signed. In that recovery, how great a part may yet be played by these war workshops!—transformed to the uses of peace; by their crowds of work-people, and by the hitherto unused intelligence they are everywhere evoking and training among both men and women.

As for the following day, my impressions, looking back, seem to be all a variant on a well-known Greek chorus, which hymns the amazing—the "terrible"—cleverness of Man! Seafaring, tillage, house-building, horse-taming, so muses Sophocles, two thousand three hundred

years ago; how did man ever find them out? "Wonders are many, but the most wonderful thing is man! *Only against death has he no resource.*"

Intelligence—and *death!* They are written everywhere in these endless workshops, devoted to the fiercest purposes of war. First of all, we visit the "danger buildings" in the fuse factory, where mostly women are employed. About 500 women are at work here, on different processes connected with the delicate mechanism and filling of the fuse and gaine, some of which are dangerous. Detonator work, for instance. The Lady Superintendent selects for it specially steady and careful women or girls, who are paid at time-and-a-quarter rate. Only about eight girls are allowed in each room. The girls here all wear—for protection—green muslin veils and gloves. It gives them a curious, ghastly look, that fits the occupation. For they are making small pellets for the charging of shells, out of a high-explosive powder. Each girl uses a small copper ladle to take the

powder out of a box before her, and puts it into a press which stamps it into a tiny block, looking like ivory. She holds her hand over a little tray of water lest any of the powder should escape. What the explosive and death-dealing power of it is, it does not do to think about.

In another room a fresh group of girls are handling a black powder for another part of the detonator, and because of the irritant nature of the powder, are wearing white bandages round the nose and mouth. There is great competition for these rooms, the Superintendent says! The girls in them work on two shifts of ten and one-half hours each, and would resent a change to a shorter shift. They have one hour for dinner, half an hour for tea, a cup of tea in the middle of the morning—and the whole of Saturdays free. To the eye of the ordinary visitor they show few signs of fatigue.

After the fuse factory we pass through the high-explosive factory, where 250 girls are at

work in a number of isolated wooden sheds filling 18-pounder shell with high explosive. The brass cartridge-case is being filled with cordite, bundles of what look like thin brown sticks, and the shell itself, including its central gaine or tube, with the various deadly explosives we have seen prepared in the "danger buildings." The shell is fitted into the cartridge-case, the primer and the fuse screwed on. It is now ready to be fired.

I stand and look at boxes of shells, packed, and about to go straight to the front. A train is waiting close by to take them the first stage on their journey. I little thought then that I should see these boxes, or their fellows, next, on the endless ranks of ammunition lorries behind the fighting lines in France, and that within a fortnight I should myself stand by and see one of those shells fired from a British gun, little more than a mile from Neuve Chapelle.

But here are the women and girls trooping out to dinner. A sweet-faced Superintendent

comes to talk to me. "They are not as strong as the men," she says, pointing to the long lines of girls, "but what they lack in strength they make up in patriotic spirit." I speak to two educated women, who turn out to be High School mistresses from a town that has been several times visited by Zeppelins. "We just felt we must come and help to kill Germans," they say quietly. "All we mind is getting up at five-thirty every morning. Oh, no! it is not too tiring."

Afterwards?—I remember one long procession of stately shops, with their high windows, their floors crowded with machines, their roofs lined with cranes, the flame of the forges, and the smoke of the fizzling steel lighting up the dark groups of men, the huge howitzer shells, red-hot, swinging in mid-air, and the same shells, tamed and gleaming, on the great lathes that rough and bore and finish them. Here are shell for the *Queen Elizabeth* guns!—the biggest shell made. This shop had been put up by good luck just as the war began. Its

output of steel has increased from 80 tons a week to 1,040.

Then another huge fuse shop, quite new, where 1,400 girls in one shift are at work—said to be the largest fuse shop known. And on the following morning, an endless spectacle of war work—gun-carriages, naval turrets, torpedo tubes, armed railway carriages, small Hotchkiss guns for merchant ships, tool-making shops, gauge shops—and so on for ever. In the tool-making shops the output has risen from 44,000 to 3,000,000 a year!

And meanwhile I have not seen anything, and shall not have time to see anything of the famous shipyards of the firm. But with regard to them, all that it is necessary to remember is that before the war they were capable of berthing twenty ships at once, from the largest battleship downward; and we have Mr. Balfour's word for it as to what has happened, since the war, in the naval shipyards of this country. "We have added *a million tons to the Navy—and we have doubled its personnel.*"

And now let me record two final sayings.

One from a manager of a department:

We have a good many Socialists here, and they constantly give trouble. But the great majority of the men have done wonderfully! Some men have put in one hundred hours a week since the war began. Some have not lost a minute since it began. The old hands have worked *splendidly*.

And another from one of the Directors:

I know of no drunkenness among our women. I don't remember ever having seen a drunken woman round here.

III

I have almost said my say on munitions, though I could continue the story much longer. But the wonder of it consists really in its vastness, in the steady development of a movement which will not end or slacken till the Allies are victorious. Except for the endless picturesqueness of the women's share in it, and the mechanical invention and adaptation going on everywhere, with which only a technical expert could deal, it is of course monotonous, and I might weary you. I will only—

before asking you to cross the Channel with me to France—put down a few notes and impressions on the Clyde district, where, as our newspapers will have told you, there is at the present moment (March 29th) some serious labour trouble, with which the Government is dealing. Until further light is thrown upon its causes, comment is better postponed. But I have spoken quite frankly in these letters of "danger spots," where a type of international Socialism is to be found—affecting a small number of men, over whom the ideas of "country" and "national honour" seem to have no hold. Every country possesses such men and must guard itself against them. A nucleus of them exists in this populous and important district. How far their influence is helped among those who care nothing for their ideas, by any real or supposed grievances against the employers, by misunderstandings and misconceptions, by the sheer nervous fatigue and irritation of the men's long effort, or by those natural fears for the future of their Unions, to

which I have once or twice referred, only one long familiar with the district could say. I can only point out here one or two interesting facts. In the first place, in this crowded countryside, where a small minority of dangerous extremists appear to have no care for their comrades in the trenches, the recruiting for the new Armies—so I learn from one of the leading authorities—has been—"taken on any basis whatever—substantially higher than in any other district. The men came up magnificently." That means that among those left behind, whatever disturbing and disintegrating forces exist in a great Labour centre have freer play than would normally be the case. A certain amount of patriotic cream has been skimmed, and in some places the milk that remains must be thin. In the second place—(you will remember the employer I quoted to you in a former letter)—the work done here by thousands and thousands of workmen since the beginning of the war, especially in the great shipyards, and done with the heartiest and most

self-sacrificing good-will, has been simply invaluable to the nation, and England remembers it well. And finally, the invasion of women has perhaps been more startling to the workmen here than anywhere else. Not a single woman was employed in the works or factories of the district before the war, except in textiles. There will soon be 15,000 in the munition workshops, and that will not be the end.

But Great Britain cannot afford—even in a single factory—to allow any trifling at this moment with the provision of guns, and the Government must—and will—act decisively.

As to the drinking in this district of which so much has been said, and which is still far in excess of what it ought to be, I found many people hard put to it to explain why the restriction of hours which has worked so conspicuously well in other districts has had comparatively little effect here. Is it defects of administration, or a certain "cussedness" in the Scotch character, which resents any tightening of law? One large employer with whom

I discuss it, believes it would suit the Scotch better to abolish all restrictions, and simply punish drunkenness much more severely. And above all—"open all possible means of amusement on Sundays, especially the cinemas!"—a new and strange doctrine, even now, in the ears of a country that holds the bones of John Knox. There seems indeed to be a terribly close connection between the dulness of the Scotch Sunday and the obstinacy of Scotch drinking; and when one thinks of the heavy toil of the week, of the confinement of the workshops, and the strain of the work, one feels at any rate that here is a problem which is to be *solved,* not preached at; and will be solved, some day, by nimbler and humaner wits than ours.

In any case, the figures, gathered a month ago from those directly concerned, as to the general extension of the national effort here, could hardly be more striking. In normal times, the district, which is given up to Admiralty work, makes ships and guns, but has

never made shells. The huge shell factories springing up all over it are a wholly new creation. As usual, they are filled with women, working under skilled male direction, and everywhere one found among managers and superintendents the same enthusiasm for the women's work. "It's their honour they work on," said one forewoman. "That's why they stand it so well." The average working week is fifty-four hours, but overtime may seriously lengthen the tale. Wages are high; canteens and rest-rooms are being everywhere provided; and the housing question is being tackled. The rapidity of the women's piece-work is astonishing, and the mingling of classes—girls of education and refinement working quite happily with those of a much humbler type—runs without friction under the influence of a common spirit. This common spirit was well expressed by a girl who before she came to the factory was working a knitting-machine. "I like this better—*because there's a purpose in it.*" A sweet-faced woman who was turning

copper bands for shell, said to me: "I never worked a machine before the war. I have done 912 in ten hours, but that tired me very much. I can do 500 or 600 quite easily."

On the same premises, after leaving the shell shops, we passed rapidly through gun shops, where I saw again processes which had become almost familiar. "The production of howitzers," said my guide, "is the question of the day. We are making them with great rapidity —but the trouble is to get enough machines." The next shop, devoted to 18-pounder field-guns, was "green fields fifteen months ago," and the one adjoining it, a fine shed about 400 feet square, for howitzer work, was started in August last, on a site "which was a bog with a burn running through it." Soon "every foot of space will be filled with machines, and there will be 1,200 people at work here, including 400 women. In the next shop we are turning out about 4,000 shrapnel and 4,000 high-explosive shells per week. When we started women on what we thought this heavy shell,

we provided men to help lift the shell in and out of the machines. The women thrust the men aside in five minutes."

Later on, as I was passing through a series of new workshops occupied with all kinds of army work and employing large numbers of women, I stopped to speak to a Belgian woman. "Have you ever done any machine work before?" "No, Madame, never—*Mais, c'est la guerre. Il faut tuer les Allemands!*" It was a quiet, passionless voice. But one thought, with a shiver, of those names of eternal infamy —of Termonde, Aerschot, Dinant, Louvain.

It was with this woman's words in my ears that I set out on my last visit—to which they were the fitting prelude. The afternoon was darkening fast. The motor sped down a river valley, sodden with rain and melting snow, and after some miles we turn into a half-made road, leading to some new buildings, and a desolate space beyond. A sentry challenges us, and we produce our permit. Then we dismount, and I look out upon a wide stretch of

what three months ago was swamp, or wet plough land. Now its 250 acres are enclosed with barbed wire, and patrolled by sentries night and day. A number of small buildings, workshops, stores, etc., are rising all over it. I am looking at what is to be the great "filling" factory of the district, where 9,000 women, in addition to male workmen, will soon be employed in charging the shell coming from the new shell factories we have left behind in the darkness.

Strange and tragic scene! Strange uprising of women!

We regain the motor and speed onwards, my secretary and I, through unknown roads far away from the city and its factories towards the country house where we are to spend the night. In my memory there surge a thousand recollections of all that I have seen in the preceding fortnight. An England roused at last—rushing to factory, and lathe, to shipyard and forge, determined to meet and dominate her terrible enemy in the workshop, as

she has long since met and dominated him at sea, and will in time dominate him on land—that is how my country looks to me to-night.

. . . The stars are coming out. Far away, over what seems like water with lights upon it, there are dim snowy mountains—majestic—rising into the sky. The noise and clamour of the factories are all quiet in the night. Two thoughts remain with me — Britain's ships in the North Sea—Britain's soldiers in the trenches. And encircling and sustaining both the justice of a great cause—as these white Highland hills look down upon and encircle this valley.

IV

Dear H.

A million and a half of men—over a quarter of a million of women—working in some 4,000 State-controlled workshops for the supply of munitions of war, not only to our own troops, but to those of our allies—the whole, in the main, a creation of six months' effort—this is the astonishing spectacle of some of the details of which I have tried, as an eye-witness, to give you in my previous letters a rapid and imperfect sketch.

But what of the men, the Armies, for which these munitions are being made and hurried to the fighting-lines? It was at Aldershot, a few days ago, that I listened to some details of the first rush of the new Armies, given me by a member of the Headquarters Staff who had been through it all. Aldershot in peace time held about 27,000 troops. Since the out-

break of war some million and a quarter of men have passed through the great camp, coming in ceaselessly for training and equipment, and going out again to the theatres of war.

In the first days and weeks of the war—during and after the marvellous precision and rapidity with which the Expeditionary Force was despatched to France—men poured in from all parts, from all businesses and occupations; rich and poor, north and south country men, English, Scotch, Irish, and Welsh; men from the Dominions, who had flung themselves into the first home-coming steamer; men from India, and men from the uttermost parts of Africa and Asia who had begged or worked their way home. They were magnificent material. They came with set faces, asking only for training, training, training!—and "what the peace soldier learns in six months," said my companion, "they learnt in six weeks. We had neither uniforms nor rifles, neither guns nor horses for them. We did not know how to feed them or to house them. In front of the head-

quarters at Aldershot, that Mecca of the soldier, where no one would dare to pass in ordinary times whose turnout is not immaculate, the most extraordinary figures, in bowler hats and bits of uniform, passed unrebuked. We had to raid the neighbouring towns for food, to send frantic embassies to London for bread and meat; to turn out any sort of shed to house them. Luckily it was summer weather; otherwise I don't know what we should have done for blankets. But nobody 'groused.' Everybody worked, and there were many who felt it 'the time of their lives.' "

And yet England "engineered the war!" England's hypocrisy and greed demanded the crushing of Germany—hence the lying "excuse" of Belgium—that apparently is what all good Germans—except those who know better—believe; what every German child is being taught. As I listen to my companion's story, I am reminded, however, of a puzzled remark which reached me lately, written just before Christmas last, by a German nurse in a Ber-

lin hospital, who has English relations, friends of my own. "We begin to wonder whether it really was England who caused the war—since you seem to be so dreadfully unprepared!" So writes this sensible girl to one of her mother's kindred in England, in a letter which escaped the German censor. She might indeed wonder! To have deliberately planned a Continental war with Germany, and Germany's 8,000,000 of soldiers, without men, guns, or ammunition beyond the requirements of an Expeditionary Force of 160,000 men, might have well become the State of Cloud-Cuckoo-Land. But the England of Raleigh, Chatham, Pitt, and Wellington has not generally been reckoned a nation of pure fools.

The military camps of Great Britain tell the tale of our incredible venture. "Great areas of land had to be cleared, levelled, and drained; barracks had to be built; one camp alone used 42,000 railway truck-loads of building material." There was no time to build new railways, and the existing roads were rapidly worn

out. They were as steadily repaired; and on every side new camps sprang up around the parent camps of the country.

The Surrey commons and woods, the Wiltshire downs, the Midland and Yorkshire heaths, the Buckinghamshire hills have been everywhere invaded—their old rural sanctities are gone. I walked in bewilderment the other day up and down the slopes of a Surrey hill which when I knew it last was one kingdom of purple heather, beloved of the honey-bees, and scarcely ever trodden by man or woman. Barracks now form long streets upon its crest and sides; practise-trenches, bombing-schools, the stuffed and dangling sacks for bayonet training, musketry ranges, and the rest, are everywhere. Tennyson, whose wandering ground it once was, would know it no more. And this camp is only one of a series which spread far and wide round the Aldershot headquarters.

Near my own home, a park and a wooded hillside, that two years ago were carefully guarded even from a neighbour's foot, are now

occupied by a large town of military huts, which can be seen for miles round. And fifteen miles away, in a historic "chase" where Catharine of Aragon lived while her trial was proceeding in a neighbouring town, a duke, bearing one of the great names of England, has himself built a camp, housing 1,200 men, for the recruits of his county regiments alone, and has equipped it with every necessary, whether for the soldier's life or training. But everywhere —East, North, South, and West—the English and Scotch roads are thronged with soldiers and horses, with trains of artillery wagons and Army Service lorries, with men marching back from night attacks or going out to scout and skirmish on the neighbouring commons and through the most sacred game-preserves. There are no more trespass laws in England —for the soldier.

You point to our recruiting difficulties in Parliament. True enough. We have our recruiting difficulties still. Lord Derby has not apparently solved the riddle; for riddle it is,

in a country of voluntary service, where none of the preparations necessary to fit conscription into ordinary life, with its obligations, have ever been made. The Government and the House of Commons are just now wrestling with it afresh, and public opinion seems to be hardening towards certain final measures that would have been impossible earlier in the war.* The call is still for men—more—and more—men! And given the conditions of this war, it is small wonder that England is restless till they are found. But amid the cross currents of criticism, I catch the voice of Mr. Walter Long, the most practical, the least boastful of men, in the House of Commons, a few nights ago: Say what you like, blame, criticise, as you like, but "what this country has done since August, 1914, is an almost incredible story." And so it is.

And now let us follow some of these khaki-

* Since these lines were written the crisis in the Government, the Irish rising, and the withdrawal of the military service bill have happened in quick succession. The country is still waiting (April 28th) for the last inevitable step.

clad millions across the seas, through the reinforcement camps, and the great supply bases, towards that fierce reality of war to which everything tends.

II

It was about the middle of February, after my return from the munition factories, that I received a programme from the War Office of a journey in France, which I was to be allowed to make. I remember being at first much dissatisfied with it. It included the names of three or four places well known to be the centres of English supply organisation in France. But it did not include any place in or near the actual fighting zone. To me, in my ignorance, the places named mainly represented the great array of finely equipped hospitals to be found everywhere in France in the rear of our Armies; and I was inclined to say that I had no special knowledge of hospital work, and that one could see hospitals in England, with more leisure to feel and talk with the sufferers

in them than a ten days' tour could give. A friendly Cabinet Minister smiled when I presented this view. "You had better accept. You will find it very different from what you suppose. The 'back' of the Army includes everything." He was more than right!

The conditions of travelling at the present moment, within the region covered by the English military organisation in France, for a woman possessing a special War Office pass, in addition to her ordinary passport, and understood to be on business which has the goodwill of the Government, though in no sense commissioned by it, are made easy by the courtesy and kindness of everybody concerned. From the moment of landing on the French side, my daughter and I passed into the charge of the military authorities. An officer accompanied us; a War Office motor took us from place to place; and everything that could be shown us in the short ten days of our tour was freely open to us. The trouble, indeed, that was taken to enable me to give some of the

vividness of personal seeing to these letters is but one of many proofs, I venture to think, of that warm natural wish in British minds that America should understand why we are fighting this war, and how we are fighting it. As to myself, I have written in complete freedom, affected only by the absolutely necessary restrictions of the military censorship; and I only hope I may be able to show something, however inadequately, of the work of men who have done a magnificent piece of organisation, far too little realised even in their own country.

For in truth we in England know very little about our bases abroad; about what it means to supply the ever-growing needs of the English Armies in France. The military world takes what has been done for granted; the general English public supposes that the Tommies, when their days in the home camps are done, get "somehow" conveyed to the front, being "somehow" equipped, fed, clothed, nursed, and mended, and sent on their way across France in interminable lines of trains.

As to the details of the process, it rarely troubles its head. The fact is, however, that the work of the great supply bases abroad, of the various Corps and Services connected with them—Army Ordnance, Army Service, Army Medical, railway and motor transport—is a desperately interesting study; and during the past eighteen months, under the "I. G. C."—Inspector-General of Communications—has developed some of the best brains in the Army.

Two days spent under the guidance of the Base Commandant or an officer of his staff among the docks and warehouses of a great French port, among the huts of its reinforcement camp, which contains more men than Aldershot before August, 1914, or in its workshops of the Army Ordnance Corps, gave me my first experience of the organising power that has gone to these departments of the war. The General in command of the base was there in the first weeks of the struggle and during the great retreat. He retired with his staff to Nantes—leaving only a broken motor-car be-

hind him!—just about the time that the French Government betook itself to Bordeaux. But in September he was back again, and the building-up process began, which has since known neither stop nor stay. That the commercial needs of a great French port should have been able to accommodate themselves as they have to the military needs of the British Army speaks loudly for the tact and good feeling on both sides. The task has not been at all times an easy one; and I could not help thinking as we walked together through the crowded scene, that the tone and temper of the able man beside me—his admiration, simply expressed, yet evidently profound, for the French spirit in the war, and for the heroic unity of the country through all ranks and classes, accounted for a great deal. In the presence of a good-will so strong, difficulties disappear.

Look now at this immense hangar or storehouse—the largest in the world—through which we are walking. It was completed three years before the war, partly, it is said, by German

money, to house the growing cotton-trade of the port. It now houses a large proportion of the food of the British Army. The hangar is half a mile long, and is bounded on one side by the docks where the ships are discharging, and on the other by the railway lines where the trains are loading up for the front.

You walk through avenues of bacon, through streets of biscuits and jam. On the quays just outside, ships from England, Canada, Norway, Argentina, Australia are pouring out their stores. Stand and watch the endless cranes at work, and think what English sea power means! And on the other side watch the packing of the trucks that are going to the front, the order and perfection with which the requisitions, large and small, of every regiment are supplied.

One thinks of the Crimean scandals. The ghost of Florence Nightingale seems to move beside us, watching contentedly what has come of all that long-reforming labour, dealing with the health, the sanitation, the food and equip-

ment of the soldier, in which she played her part; and one might fancy the great shade pausing specially beside the wired-in space labelled "Medical Comforts," and generally known as "The Cage." Medical *necessaries* are housed elsewhere; but here are the dainties, the special foods, the easing appliances of all kinds which are to make life bearable to many a sorely-wounded man.

As to the huge sheds of the Army Ordnance, which supply everything that the soldier doesn't eat, all metal stores—nails, horseshoes, oil-cans, barbed wire—by the ton; trenching-tools, wheelbarrows, pickaxes, razors, sand-bags, knives, screws, shovels, picketing-pegs, and the like—they are of course endless; and the men who work in them are housed in one of the largest sheds, in tiers of bunks from floor to ceiling.

Perhaps the most interesting part of the Depot to the outsider are the repairing sheds and workshops established in a suburb of the town to which we drive on. For this is work

that has never been done before in connection with an army in the field. Day by day trains full of articles for repair come down from the front. I happened to see a train of the kind, later on, leaving a station close to the fighting line. Guns, rifles, range-finders, gun-carriages, harness, all torn and useless uniforms, tents, boots by the thousand, come to this base to be repaired, or to be sent home for transformation into "shoddy" to the Yorkshire towns. Nothing seems too large or too small for Colonel D.'s department. Field-glasses, periscopes, water-bottles, they arrive from the trenches with the same certainty as a wounded howitzer or machine-gun, and are returned as promptly.

In one shed, my guide called my attention to shelves on which were a number of small objects in china and metal. "They were found in kits left on the field," he says gently. "Wherever we can identify the owner, such things are carefully returned to his people. These could not be identified."

I took up a little china dog, a bit of coarse

French pottery, which some dead father had bought, at Poperinghe, perhaps, or Bailleul, for the children at home. Near by were "souvenirs"—bits of shell, of German equipment; then some leaves of a prayer-book, a neck-medallion of a saint—and so on—every fragment steeped in the poignancy of sudden death—death in youth, at the height of life.

The boot and uniform sheds, where 500 French women and girls, under soldier-foremen, are busy, the harness-mending room, and the engineering workshops might reassure those pessimists among us—especially of my own sex—who think that the male is naturally and incorrigibly a wasteful animal. Colonel D. shows me the chart which is the record of his work, and its steadily mounting efficiency. He began work with 140 men, he is now employing more than a thousand, and his repairing sheds are saving thousands of pounds a week to the British Government. He makes all his own power, and has four or five powerful dynamos at work.

We come out into a swirl of snow, and henceforward sightseeing is difficult. Yet we do our best to defy the weather. We tramp through the deepening snow of the great camp, which lines the slopes of the hills above the river and the town, visiting its huts and recreation-rooms, its Cinema theatre, and its stores, and taking tea with the Colonel of an Infantry Base Depot, who is to be our escort on the morrow.

But on the last morning before we start we mount to the plateau above the reinforcement camp, where the snow lies deep and the wind blows one of the sharpest blasts of the winter. Here are bodies of men going through some of the last refinements of drill before they start for the front; here are trenches of all kinds and patterns, revetted in ways new and old, and planned according to the latest experience brought from the fighting line. The instructors here, as at other training-camps in France, are all men returned from the front. The men to whom they have to give the final touch of train-

ing—men so near themselves to the real thing —are impatient of any other sort.

As we stand beside the trenches under the bright sun and piercing wind, looking at the dark lines of British soldiers on the snow, and listening to the explanations of a most keen and courteous officer, one's eyes wander, on the one side, over the great town and port, over the French coast and the distant sea, and on the other side, inland, over the beautiful French landscape with its farms and country houses. Everything one sees is steeped in history, a mingled history, in which England and France up to five centuries ago bore an almost equal share. Now again they are mingled here; all the old enmities buried in a comradeship that goes deeper far than they, a comradeship of the spirit that will surely mould the life of both nations for years to come.

How we grudged the snow and the low-sweeping clouds and the closed motor, on our drive of the next day! I remember little more of it than occasional glimpses of the tall cliffs

that stand sentinel along the river, a hasty look at a fine church above a steeply built town, an army lorry stuck deep in the snow-drifts, and finally the quays and ships of another base port. Our escort, Colonel S., pilots us to a pleasant hotel full of officers, mostly English, belonging to the Lines of Communications, with a few poor wives and mothers among them who have come over to nurse their wounded in one or other of the innumerable hospitals of the base.

Before dinner the general commanding the base had found me out and I had told my story.

"Oh, we'll put some notes together for you. We were up most of last night. I dare say we shall be up most of this. But a little more or less doesn't matter." I protested most sincerely. But it is always the busiest men who shoulder the extra burdens; and the notes duly reached me. From them, from the talk of others spending their last ounce of brain and energy in the service of the base, and from the evidence of my own eyes, let me try and draw

some general picture of what that service is: Suppose a British officer speaking:

Remember first that every man, every horse, every round of ammunition, every article of clothing and equipment, all the guns and vehicles, and nearly all the food have to be brought across the English Channel to maintain and reinforce the ever-growing British Army, which holds now so important a share of the fighting line in France. The ports of entry are already overtaxed by the civil and military needs of France herself. Imagine how difficult it is—and how the difficulty grows daily with the steady increase of the British Army—to receive, disembark, accommodate, and forward the multitude of men and the masses of material!

You see the khaki in the French streets, the mingling everywhere of French and English; but the ordinary visitor can form no idea of the magnitude of this friendly invasion. There is no formal delimitation of areas or spaces, in docks, or town, or railways. But gradually the observer will realise that the town is honeycombed with the temporary locations of the British Army, which everywhere speckle the map hanging in the office of the Garrison Quartermaster. And let him further visit the place where the long lines of reinforcement, training and hospital camps are installed on open ground, and old England's mighty effort will scarcely hide itself from the least intelligent. *Work, efficiency, economy* must be the watchwords of a base. Its functions may not be magnificent—*but they are war*—and war is impossible unless they are rightly carried out.

When we came back from the Loire in September,

after our temporary retreat, the British *personnel* at this place grew from 1,100 to 11,000 in a week. Now there are thousands of troops always passing through, thousands of men in hospital, thousands at work in the docks and storehouses. And let any one who cares for horses go and look at the Remount Depot and the Veterinary Hospitals. The whole treatment of horses in this war has been revolutionised. Look at the cheap, ingenious stables, the comfort produced by the simplest means, the kind quiet handling; look at the Convalescent Horse Depots, the operating theatres, and the pharmacy stores in the Veterinary Hospitals.

As to the troops themselves, every Regiment has its own lines, for its own reinforcements. Good food, clean cooking, civilised dining-rooms, excellent sanitation—the base provides them all. It provides, too, whatever else Tommy Atkins wants, and *close at hand;* wet and dry canteens, libraries, recreation huts, tea and coffee huts, palatial cinemas, concerts. And what are the results? Excellent behaviour; excellent relations between the British soldier and the French inhabitants; absence of all serious crime.

Then look at the docks. You will see there armies of labourers, and long lines of ships discharging horses, timber, rations, fodder, coal, coke, petrol. Or at the stores and depots. It would take you days to get any idea of the huge quantities of stores, or of the new and ingenious means of space economy and quick distribution. As to the Works Department—camps and depots are put up "while you wait" by the R. E. officers and unskilled military labour. Add to all this the armies of clerks, despatch riders, and motor-cyclists—and the immense

hospital *personnel*—then, if you make any intelligible picture of it in your mind, you will have some idea of what bases like these mean.

Pondering these notes, it seemed to me that the only way to get some kind of "intelligible picture" in two short days was to examine something in detail, and the rest in general! Accordingly, we spent a long Sunday morning in the Motor Transport Depot, which is the creation of Colonel B., and perhaps as good an example as one could find anywhere in France of the organising talent of the able British officer.

The depot opened in a theatre on the 13th of August, 1914. "It began," says Colonel B., "with a few balls of string and a bag of nails!" Its staff then consisted of 6 officers and 91 N. C. O.'s and men—its permanent staff at present is about 500. All the drivers of some 20,000 motor vehicles—nearly 40,000 men—are tested here and, if necessary, instructed before going up to the fighting lines; and the depot deals with 350 different types

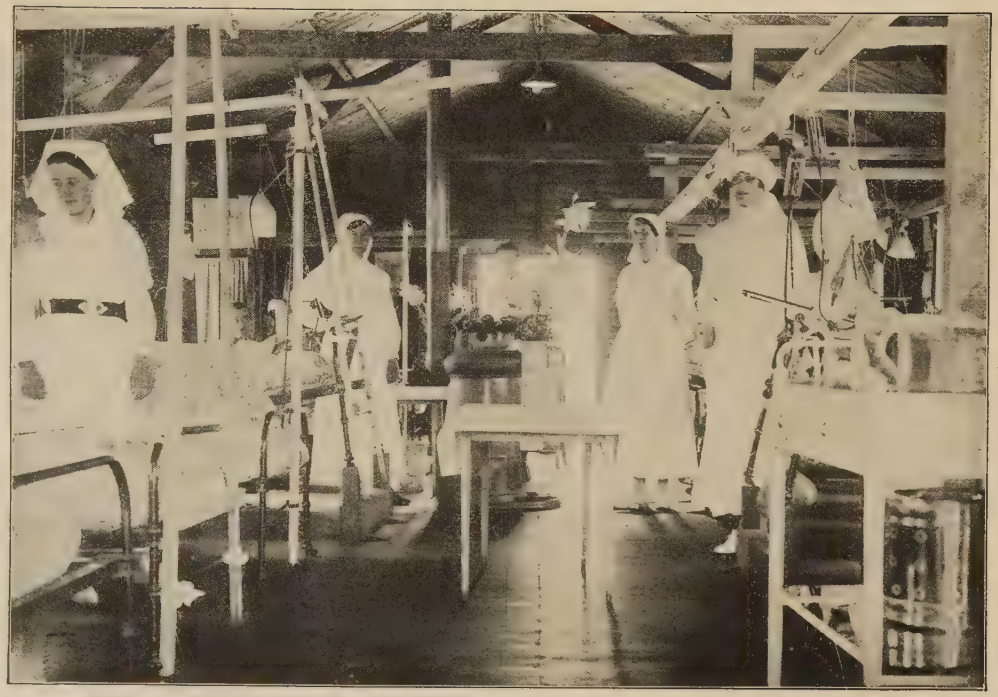
of vehicles. In round figures 100,000 separate parts are now dealt with, stored, and arranged in the depot. The system of records and accounts is extraordinarily perfect, and so ingenious that it seems to work itself.

Meanwhile Colonel B.'s relations with his army of chauffeurs, of whom about 1,000 are always housed on the premises, are exceedingly human and friendly in spite of the strictness of the army discipline. Most of his men who are not married, the Colonel tells me, have found a "friend," in the town, one or other of its trimly dressed girls, with whom the English mechanic "walks out," on Sundays and holidays. There are many engagements, and, as I gather, no misconduct. Marriage is generally postponed till after the war, owing to the legal and other difficulties involved. But marriage there will be when peace comes. As to how the Englishman and the French girl communicate, there are amusing speculations, but little exact knowledge. There can be small doubt, however, that a number of hybrid words perfectly

understood by both sides are gradually coming into use, and if the war lasts much longer, a rough Esperanto will have grown up which may leave its mark on both languages. The word "narpoo" is a case in point. It is said to be originally a corruption of *" il n'y a plus"*— the phrase which so often meets the Tommy foraging for eggs or milk or fruit. At present it means anything from "done up" to "dead." Here is an instance of it, told me by a chaplain at the front. He was billeted in a farm with a number of men, and a sergeant. All the men, from the chaplain to the youngest private, felt a keen sympathy and admiration for the women of the farm, who were both working the land and looking after their billetees, with wonderful pluck and energy. One evening the chaplain arriving at the open door of the farm, saw in the kitchen beyond it the daughter of the house, who had just come in from farm work. She was looking at a pile of dirty plates and dishes which had to be washed before supper, and she gave a sigh of fatigue. Suddenly

in the back door on the other side of the kitchen appeared the sergeant. He looked at the girl, then at the dishes, then again at the girl. "Fattigay?" he said cheerfully, going up to her. "Narpoo? Give 'em me. Compree?" And before she could say a word he had driven her away, and plunged into the work.

The general relations, indeed, between our soldiers and the French population could not be better. General after General, both in the bases, and at the front dwelt on this point. A distinguished General commanding one of our armies on the line, spoke to me of it with emphasis. "The testimony is universal, and it is equally creditable to both sides." The French civilian in town and country is, no doubt, profiting by the large demand and prompt payments of the British forces. But just as in the case of the women munition workers, there is infinitely more in it than money. On the British part there is, in both officers and men, a burning sympathy for what France has suffered, whether from the outrages of a brutal



One of the Wards of a Base Hospital Visited by the King.

A Howitzer in the Act of Firing.

enemy, or from the inevitable hardships of war. The headquarters of the General I have mentioned were not more than fifteen or twenty miles from towns where unspeakable things were done by German soldiers—officers no less than men—in the first weeks of the struggle. With such deeds the French peasantry and small townsfolk, as they still remain in Picardy and Artois, can and do contrast, day by day, the temper, the courtesy, the humanity of the British soldier. Great Britain, of course, is a friend and ally; and Germany is the enemy. But these French folk, these defenceless women and children, know instinctively that the British Army, like their own, whether in its officers, or in its rank and file, is incapable, toward any non-combatant, of what the German Army has done repeatedly, officially, and still excuses and defends.

The signs of this feeling for and sympathy with the French *civils*, among our soldiers, are many. Here is one story, slight but illuminating, told me by an eye-witness. She is one

of a band of women under a noble chief, who, since very early in the war, have been running a canteen for soldiers, night and day, at the large railway-station of the very base I have been describing, where trains are perpetually arriving from and departing to the front. In the early days of the war, a refugee train arrived one afternoon full of helpless French folk, mainly of course women and children, and old people, turned out of their homes by the German advance. In general, the refugees were looked after by the French Red Cross, "who did it admirably, going along the trains with hot drinks and food and clothing." But on this occasion there were a number of small children, and some of them got overlooked in the hubbub. "I found a raw young Scotchman, little more than a boy, from one of the Highland regiments," with six youngsters clinging to him, for whom he peremptorily demanded tea. "He had tears in his eyes, and his voice was all husky as he explained in homely Scotch how the bairns had been turned out of their

homes—how he *couldn't* bear it—and he would give them tea." A table was found. "I provided the milk, and he paid for bread and butter and chocolate, and waited on and talked to the six little French people himself. Strange to say, they seemed to understand each other quite well."

III

It was with this railway-station canteen that my latest memories of the great base are concerned. All the afternoon of our second day at —— was spent in seeing a fine Red Cross hospital, and then in walking or driving round the endless reinforcement and hospital camps in the open country. Everywhere the same vigourous expanding organisation, the same ceaselessly growing numbers, the same humanity and care in detail. "How many years have we been at war?" one tends to ask oneself in bewilderment, as the spectacle unrolls itself. "Is it possible that all this is the work of eighteen months?" And I am reminded of the

Scotch sergeant's reply to his German captive, who asked his opinion about the duration of the war. "I'll tell you what—it's the furrst five years that'll be the worst!" We seem—in the bases—to have slipped through them already, measuring by any of the ordinary ratios of work to time. On my return home, a diplomat representing one of the neutral nations, told me that the Military Secretary of his staff had been round the English bases in France, and had come back with his "eyes starting out of his head." Having seen them myself, the phrase seemed to me quite natural.

Then, last of all, as the winter evening fell, we turned toward the canteen at the railway-station. We found it going on in an old goods' shed, simply fitted up with a long tea and coffee bar, tables and chairs; and in some small adjacent rooms. It was filled from end to end with a crowd of soldiers, who after many hours of waiting, were just departing for the front. The old shabby room, with its points of bright light, and its shadowy sides and corners, made

a Rembrandtesque setting for the moving throng of figures. Some men were crowding round the bar; some were writing letters in haste to post before the train went off; the piano was going, and a few, gathered round it, were singing the songs of the day, of which the choruses were sometimes taken up in the room. The men—drafts going up to different regiments on the line—appeared to me to come from many parts. The broad Yorkshire and Cumbrian speech, Scotch, the cockney of the Home Counties, the Northumberland burr, the tongues of Devon and Somerset—one seemed to hear them all in turn. The demands at the counter had slackened a little, and I was presently listening to some of the talk of the indefatigable helpers who work this thing night and day. One of them drew a picture of the Canadians, the indomitable fighters of Ypres and Loos, of their breathless energy, and impatience of anything but the quickest pace of life, their appetites!—half a dozen hard-boiled eggs, at 3*d* each, swallowed down in a moment

of time; then of the French-Canadians, their Old World French, their old-world Catholicism, simple and passionate. One of these last asked if there was any chance of his being sent to Egypt. "Why are you so anxious to go to Egypt?" "Because it was there the Holy Family rested," said the lad shyly. The lady to whom he spoke described to him the tree and the Holy Well in St. Georgius, and he listened entranced.

Sometimes a rough lot fill the canteen, drawn from the poorest class, perhaps, of an English seaport. They hustle for their food, shout at the helpers, and seem to have no notion that such words as "please" and "thank you" exist. After three or four hours of battling with such an apparently mannerless crew one of the helpers saw them depart to the platform where their train was waiting for them, with very natural relief. But they were no sooner gone, when a guardsman, with the manners, the stature, and the smartness of his kind, came back to the counter, and asked to speak

to the lady in charge of it. "Those chaps, Miss, what have just gone out," he said apologetically, "have never been used to ladies, and they don't know what to say to them. So they asked me just to come in and say for them they were very much obliged for all the ladies' kindness, but they couldn't say it themselves." The tired helper was suddenly too choky to answer. The message, the choice of the messenger, as one sure to do "the right thing," were both so touching.

But there was a sudden movement in the crowd. The train was up. We all surged out upon the platform, and I watched the embarkation—the endless train engulfing its hundreds of men. Just as I had seen the food and equipment trains going up from the first base laden with everything necessary to replace the daily waste of the army, so here was the train of human material, going up to replace the daily waste of *men*. After many hours of travelling, and perhaps some of rest, these young soldiers —how young most of them were!—would find

themselves face to face with the sharpest realities of war. I thought of what I had seen in the Red Cross hospital that afternoon—"what man has made of man"—the wreck of youth and strength, the hideous pain, the helpless disablement.

But the station rang with laughter and talk. Some one in the canteen began to play "Keep the Home Fires Burning"—and the men in the train joined in, though not very heartily, for as one or two took care to tell me, laughingly —"That and 'Tipperary' are awfully stale now!" A bright-faced lad discussed with D—— how long the war would last. "And *shan't* we miss it when it's done!" he said, with a jesting farewell to us, as he jumped into the train which had begun to move. Slowly, slowly it passed out of sight, amid waves of singing and the shouting of good-byes. . . .

It was late that evening, when after much talk with various officers, I went up to my room to try and write, bewildered by a multitude of impressions—impressions of human

energy, human intelligence, human suffering. What England is doing in this country will leave, it seems to me, indelible marks upon the national character. I feel a natural pride, as I sit thinking over the day, in all this British efficiency and power, and a quick joy in the consciousness of our fellowship with France, and hers with us. But the struggle at Verdun is still in its first intensity, and when I have read all that the evening newspapers contain about it, there stirs in me a fresh realisation of the meaning of what I have been seeing. In these great bases, in the marvellous railway organisation, in the handling of the vast motor transport in all its forms, in the feeding and equipment of the British Army, we have the scaffolding and preparation of war, which, both in the French and English Armies, have now reached a perfection undreamt of when the contest began. But the war itself—the deadly struggle of that distant line to which it all tends? It is in the flash and roar of the guns, in the courage and endurance of the

fighting man, that all this travail of brain and muscle speaks at last. At that courage and endurance, women, after all, can only guess—through whatever rending of their own hearts.

But I was to come somewhat nearer to it than I thought then. The morrow brought surprise.

V

Dear H.

Our journey farther north through the deep February snow was scarcely less striking as an illustration of Great Britain's constantly growing share in the war than the sight of the great supply bases themselves. The first part of it, indeed, led over solitary uplands, where the chained wheels of the motor rocked in the snow, and our military chauffeur dared make no stop, for fear he should never be able to start again. All that seemed alive in the white landscape were the partridges—sometimes in great flocks—which scudded at our approach, or occasional groups of hares in the middle distance holding winter parley. The road seemed interminably long and straight, and ours were almost the first tracks in it. The snow came down incessantly, and once or twice it looked as though we should be left stranded in the white wilderness.

But after a third of the journey was over, the snow began to lessen and the roads to clear. We dropped first into a seaport town which offered much the same mingled scene of French and English, of English nurses, and French *poilus,* of unloading ships, and British soldiers, as the bases we had left, only on a smaller scale. And beyond the town we climbed again on to the high land, through a beautiful country of interwoven downs, and more plentiful habitation. Soon, indeed, the roads began to show the signs of war—a village or small town, its picturesque market-place filled with a park of artillery wagons; roads lined with motor lorries with the painted shell upon them that tells ammunition; British artillerymen in khaki, bringing a band of horses out of a snow-bound farm; closed motor-cars filled with officers hurrying past; then an open car with King's Messengers, tall, soldierly figures, looking in some astonishment at the two ladies, as they hurry by. And who or what is this horseman looming out of the sleet—like a figure from a

piece of Indian or Persian embroidery, turbaned and swarthy, his cloak swelling out round his handsome head and shoulders, the buildings of a Norman farm behind him? "There are a few Indian cavalry about here," says our guide—"they are billeted in the farms." And presently the road is full of them. Their Eastern forms, their dark, intent faces pass strangely through the Norman landscape.

Now we are only some forty miles from the line, and we presently reach another town containing an important British Headquarters, where we are to stop for luncheon. The inn at which we put up is like the song in "Twelfth Night," "old and plain"—and when lunch is done, our Colonel goes to pay an official call at Headquarters, and my daughter and I make our way to the historic church of the town. The Colonel joins us here with another officer, who brings the amazing news that "G. H. Q."—General Headquarters—that mysterious centre and brain of all things—invites us for two

days! If we accept, an officer will come for us on the morning of March 1st to our hotel in Boulogne and take us by motor, some forty miles, to the guest-house where G. H. Q. puts up its visitors. *"Accept!"* Ah, if one could only forget for a moment the human facts behind the absorbing interest and excitement of this journey, one might be content to feel only the stir of quickened pulses, of gratitude for a further opportunity so tremendous.

As it was, I saw all the journey henceforward with new eyes, because of that to which it was bringing us. On we sped, through the French countryside, past a great forest lying black on the edge of the white horizon—I open my map and find it marked Bois de Crecy!—past another old town, with Agincourt a few miles to the east, and so into a region of pine and sand that borders the sea. Darkness comes down, and we miss our way. What are these lines of light among the pine woods? Another military and hospital camp, which we are to see on the morrow—so we discover at last. But we

have overshot our goal, and must grope our way back through the pine woods to the sea-shore, where a little primitive hotel, built for the summer, with walls that seem to be made of brown paper, receives us. But we have motored far that day, and greet it joyfully.

The following morning we woke to a silvery sunlight, with, at last, some promise of spring over a land cleared of snow. The day was spent in going through a camp which has been set down in one of the pleasantest and healthiest spots of France, a favourite haunt of French artists before the war. Now the sandy slopes, whence the pines, alack, have been cut away, are occupied by a British reinforcement camp, by long lines of hospitals, by a convalescent depot, and by the training-grounds, where, as at other bases, the newly arrived troops are put through their last instruction before going to the front. As usual, the magnitude of what has been done in one short year filled one with amazement. Here is the bare catalogue: Infantry Base Depots, *i. e.* sleeping and mess-

quarters, for thousands of men belonging to the new armies; 16 hospitals with 21,000 beds, 3 rifle ranges; 2 training-camps; a machine-gun training-school; a vast laundry worked by Frenchwomen under British organisation, which washes for *all* the hospitals, 30,000 pieces a day; recreation huts of all types and kinds, official and voluntary; a Cinema theatre, seating 800 men, with performances twice a day; nurses' clubs; officers' clubs; a Supply Depot for food; an Ordnance Depot for everything that is not food; new sidings to the railway, where 1,000 men can be entrained on the one side, while 1,000 men are detraining on the other; or two full ambulance-trains can come in and go out; a Convalescent Depot of 2,000 patients, and a Convalescent Horse Depot of 2,000 horses, etcetera. And this is the work accomplished since last April in one camp.

Yet, as I look back upon it, my chief impression of that long day is an impression, first, of endless hospital huts and marquees, with their rows of beds, in which the pale or flushed

faces are generally ready—unless pain or weariness forbid—as a visitor ventures timidly near, to turn and smile in response to the few halting words of sympathy or inquiry which are all one can find to say; and, next, of such a wealth of skill, and pity, and devotion poured out upon this terrible human need, as makes one thank God for doctors, and nurses, and bright-faced V. A. D.'s. After all, one tremblingly asks oneself, in spite of the appalling facts of wounds, and death, and violence in which the human world is now steeped, is it yet possible, is it yet true, that the ultimate thing, the final power behind the veil—to which at least this vast linked spectacle of suffering and tenderness, here in this great camp, testifies—is *not* Force, but Love? Is this the mysterious message which seems to breathe from these crowded wards—to make them *just* bearable. Let me recollect the open door of an operating theatre, and a young officer, quite a boy, lying there with a bullet in his chest, which the surgeons were just about to try and

extract. The fine, pale features of the wounded man, the faces of the surgeon and the nurses, so intent and cheerfully absorbed, the shining surfaces and appliances of the white room—stamp themselves on memory. I recollect, too, one John S——, a very bad case, a private. "Oh, you must come and see John S——," says one of the Sisters. "We get all the little distractions we can for John. Will he recover? Well, we thought so—but"—her face changes gravely—"John himself seems to have made up his mind lately. He knows—but he never complains." Knows what? We go to see him, and he turns round philosophically from his tea. "Oh, I'm all right—a bit tired—that's all." And then a smile passes between him and his nurse. He has lost a leg, he has a deep wound in his back which won't heal, which is draining his life away—poor, poor John S——! Close by is a short, plain man, with a look of fevered and patient endurance that haunts one now to think of. "It's my eyes. I'm afraid they're getting worse. I was hit in the

head, you see. Yes, the pain's bad—sometimes." The nurse looks at him anxiously as we pass, and explains what is being tried to give relief.

This devotion of the nurses—how can one ever say enough of it! I recall the wrath of a medical officer in charge of a large hospital at Rouen. "Why don't they give more Red Crosses to the *working nurses?* They don't get half enough recognition. I have a nurse here who has been twelve months in the operating theatre. She ought to have a V. C.!—It's worth it."

And here is a dark-eyed young officer who had come from a distant colony to fight for England. I find him in an officer's hospital, established not long after the war broke out, in a former Casino, where the huge baccarat-room has been turned into two large and splendid wards. He is courteously ready to talk about his wound, but much more ready to talk about his Sister.

"It's simply *wonderful* what they do for us!"

he says, all his face lighting up. "When I was worst there wasn't an hour in the day or night my Sister wasn't ready to try anything in the world to help me. But they're all like that."

Let me here gratefully recall, also, the hospitals organised by the Universities of Chicago and Harvard, entirely staffed by American Sisters and Doctors, each of them providing 34 doctors and 80 nurses, and dealing with 1,040 patients. Harvard has maintained a general hospital with the British Force in France since July, 1915. The first passages and uniforms were paid for by the British Government, but the University has itself paid all passages, and provided all uniforms since the start; and it is proposed, I am told, to carry on this generous help indefinitely.

Twenty thousand wounded!—while every day the ambulance trains come and go from the front, or to other bases—there to fill up one or other of the splendid hospital ships that take our brave fellows back to England, and home, and rest. And this city of hospitals, under its

hard-pressed medical chief, with all its wealth of scientific invention, and painsaving device, and unremitting care, with its wonderful health and recovery statistics, has been the growth of just twelve months. The mind wavers between the two opposing images it suggests: war and its havoc on the one hand—the power of the human brain and the goodness of the human heart on the other.

II

It was late on the 29th of February that we reached our next resting-place, to find a kind greeting from another Base Commandant and final directions for our journey of the morrow. We put up at one of the old commercial inns of the town (it is not easy to find hotel quarters of any kind just now, when every building at all suitable has been pressed into the hospital service) and I found delight in watching the various types of French officers, naval and military, who came in to the *table d'hôte,* plunging as soon as they had thrown off their caps and

cloaks, and while they waited for their consommé, into the papers with the latest news of Verdun. But we were too tired to try and talk! The morning came quickly, and with it our escort from G. H. Q. We said good-bye to Colonel S., who had guided our journey so smoothly through all the fierce drawbacks of the weather, and made friends at once with our new guide, the staff-officer who deals with the guests of G. H. Q. Never shall I forget that morning's journey! I find in my notes: "A beautiful drive—far more beautiful than I had expected—over undulating country, with distant views of interlocking downs, and along typical French roads, tree or forest bordered, running straight as a line up-hill and down-hill, over upland and plain. One exquisite point of view especially comes back to me, where a road to the coast—that coast which the Germans so nearly reached!—diverged upon our left, and all the lowlands westward came into sight. It was pure Turner, the soft sunlight of the day, with its blue shadows, and pale-blue

sky; the yellow chalk hills, still marked with streaks of snow; the woods, purple and madder brown, the distances ethereally blue; and the villages, bare and unlovely compared with the villages of Kent and Sussex, but expressing a strong old historic life, sprung from the soil, and one with it. The first distant glimpse, as we turned a hill-corner, of the old town which was our destination—extraordinarily fine!—its ancient church a towered mass of luminous grey under the sunshine, gathering the tiled roofs into one harmonious whole."

But we avoided the town itself and found ourselves presently descending an avenue of trees to the eighteenth-century château, which is used by G. H. Q. as a hostel for its guests —allied and neutral correspondents, military attachés, special missions, and the like. In a few minutes I found myself standing bewildered by the strangeness and the interest of it all, in a charming Louis-Quinze room, plain and simple in the true manner of the genuine French country house, but with graceful pan-

elled walls, an old *armoire* of the date, windows wide open to the spring sun, and a half-wild garden outside. A *femme de ménage*, much surprised to be waiting on two ladies, comes to look after us. And this is France!—and we are only thirty miles from that fighting line, which has drawn our English hearts to it all these days.

A map is waiting for each of us down-stairs, and we are told, roughly, where it is proposed to take us. A hurried lunch, and we are in the motor again, with Captain —— sitting in front. "You have your passes?" he asks us, and we anxiously verify the new and precious papers that brought us from our last stage, and will have to be shown on our way. We drive first to Arques, and Hazebrouck, then southeast. At a certain village we call at the Divisional Headquarters. The General comes out himself, and proposes to guide us on. "I will take you as near to the fighting line as I can."

On we went, in two motors; the General with me, Captain —— and D. following. We

passed through three villages, and after the first we were within shell range of the German batteries ahead. But I cannot remember giving a thought to the fact, so absorbing to the unaccustomed eye were all the accumulating signs of the actual battle-line; the endless rows of motor-lorries, either coming back from, or going up to the front, now with food, now with ammunition, reserve trenches to right and left of the road; a "dump" or food-station, whence carts filled from the heavy lorries go actually up to the trenches, lines of artillery-wagons, parks of ammunition, or motor-ambulances, long lines of picketed horses, motor-cyclists dashing past. In one village we saw a merry crowd in the little *place* gathered round a field-kitchen whence came an excellent fragrance of good stew. A number of the men were wearing leeks in their ears for St. David's Day. "You're Welsh, then?" I said to one of the cooks (by this time we had left the motor and were walking). "I'm not!" said the little fellow, with a laughing look. "It's St. Pat-

rick's Day I'm waitin' for! But I've no objection to givin' St. David a turn!"

He opened his kitchen to show me the good things going on, and as we moved away there came up a marching platoon of men from the trenches, who had done their allotted time there and were coming back to billets. The General went to greet them. "Well, my boys, you could stick it all right?" It was good to see the lightening on the tired faces, and to watch the group disappear into the cheerful hubbub of the village.

We walked on, and outside the village I heard the guns for the first time. We were now "actually in the battle," according to my companion, and a shell was quite possible, though not probable. Again, I can't remember that the fact made any impression upon us. We were watching now parties of men at regular intervals sitting waiting in the fields beside the road, with their rifles and kits on the grass near them. They were waiting for the signal to move up toward the firing line as soon

as the dusk was further advanced. "We shall meet them later," said the General, "as we come back."

At the same moment he turned to address a young artillery-officer in the road: "Is your gun near here?" "Yes, sir, I was just going back to it." He was asked to show us the way. As we followed I noticed the white puff of a shell, far ahead, over the flat, ditch-lined fields; a captive balloon was making observations about half a mile in front, and an aeroplane passed over our heads. "Ah, not a Boche," said Captain —— regretfully, "but we brought a Boche down here yesterday, just over this village—a splendid fight."

Meanwhile, the artillery fire was quickening. We reached a ruined village from which all normal inhabitants had been long since cleared away. The shattered church was there, and I noticed a large crucifix quite intact still hanging on its chancel wall. A little farther and the boyish artillery-officer, our leader, who had been by this time joined by a comrade, turned

and beckoned to the General. Presently we were creeping through seas of mud down into the gun emplacement, so carefully concealed that no aeroplane overhead could guess it.

There it was—how many of its fellows I had seen in the Midland and northern workshops!—its muzzle just showing in the dark, and nine or ten high-explosive shells lying on the bench in front of the breech. One is put in. We stand back a little, and a sergeant tells me to put my fingers in my ears and look straight at the gun. Then comes the shock—not so violent as I had expected—and the cartridge-case drops out. The shell has sped on its way to the German trenches—with what result to human flesh and blood? But I remember thinking very little of that—till afterwards. At the time, the excitement of the shot and of watching that little group of men in the darkness held all one's nerves gripped.

In a few more minutes we were scrambling out again through the deep, muddy trench leading to the dugout, promising to come back to

tea with the officers, in their billet, when our walk was done.

Now indeed we were "in the battle"! Our own guns were thundering away behind us, and the road was more and more broken up by shell holes. "Look at that group of trees to your left—beyond it is Neuve Chapelle," said our guide. "And you see those ruined cottages, straight ahead, and the wood behind." He named a wood thrice famous in the history of the war. "Our lines are just beyond the cottages, and the German lines just in front of the wood. How far are we from them? Three-quarters of a mile." It was discussed whether we should be taken zigzag through the fields to the entrance of the communication-trench. But the firing was getting hotter, and Captain —— was evidently relieved when we elected to turn back. Shall I always regret that lost opportunity? You did ask me to write something about "the life of the soldiers in the trenches"—and that was the nearest that any woman could personally have come to it!

But I doubt whether anything more—anything, at least, that was possible—could have deepened the whole effect. We had been already nearer than any woman—even a nurse—has been, in this war, to the actual fighting on the English line, and the cup of impressions was full.

As we turned back, I noticed a little ruined cottage, with a Red Cross flag floating. Our guide explained that it was a field dressing-station. It was not for us—who could not help—to ask to go in. But the thought of it—there were some badly wounded in it—pursued me as we walked on through the beautiful evening.

A little farther we came across what I think moved me more than anything else in that crowded hour—those same companies of men we had seen sitting waiting in the fields, now marching quietly, spaced one behind the other, up to the trenches, to take their turn there. Every day I am accustomed to see bodies, small and large, of khaki-clad men, marching through these Hertfordshire lanes. But this

was different. The bearing was erect and manly, the faces perfectly cheerful; but there was the seriousness in them of men who knew well the work to which they were going. I caught a little quiet whistling, sometimes, but no singing. We greeted them as they passed, with a shy "Good luck!" and they smiled shyly back, surprised, of course, to see a couple of women on that road. But there was no shyness towards the General. It was very evident that the relations between him and them were as good as affection and confidence on both sides could make them.

I still see the bright tea-table in that corner of a ruined farm, where our young officers presently greeted us—the General marking our maps to make clear where he had actually been —the Captain of the battery springing up to show off his gramophone—while the guns crashed at intervals close beside us, range-finding, probably, searching out a portion of the German line, under the direction of some hidden observer with his telephone. It was

over all too quickly. Time was up, and soon the motor was speeding back towards the Divisional Headquarters. The General and I talked of war, and what could be done to stop it. A more practical religion "lifting mankind again"?—a new St. Francis, preaching the old things in new ways? "But in this war we had and we have no choice. We are fighting for civilisation and freedom, and we must go on till we win."

III

It was long before I closed my eyes in the pretty room of the old château, after an evening spent in talk with some officers of the Headquarters Staff. When I woke in the dawn I little guessed what the day (March 2nd) was to bring forth, or what was already happening thirty miles away on the firing line. Zélie, the *femme de ménage,* brought us our breakfast to our room, coffee and bread and eggs, and by half-past nine we were down-stairs, booted and spurred, to find the motor at the door, a

simple lunch being packed up, and gas-helmets got ready! "We have had a very successful action this morning," said Captain ——, evidently in the best of spirits. "We have taken back some trenches on the Ypres-Comines Canal that we lost a little while ago, and captured about 200 prisoners. If we go off at once, we shall be in time to see the German counter-attack."

It was again fine, though not bright, and the distances far less clear. This time we struck northeast, passing first the sacred region of G. H. Q. itself, where we showed our passes. Then after making our way through roads lined interminably, as on the previous day, with the splendid motor-lorries laden with food and ammunition, which have made such a new thing of the transport of this war, interspersed with rows of ambulances and limbered wagons, with flying-stations and horse lines, we climbed a hill to one of the finest positions in this northern land; an old town, where Gaul and Roman, Frank and Fleming, English and French have

clashed, which looks out northward towards the Yser and Dunkirk, and east towards Ypres. Now, if the mists will only clear, we shall see Ypres! But, alas, they lie heavy over the plain, and we descend the hill again without that vision. Now we are bound for Poperinghe, and must go warily, because there is a lively artillery action going on beyond Poperinghe, and it is necessary to find out what roads are being shelled.

On the way we stop at an air-station, to watch the aeroplanes rising and coming down, and at a point near Poperinghe we go over a casualty-clearing station—a collection of hospital huts, with storehouses and staff quarters —with the medical officer in charge. Here were women nurses who are not allowed in the field dressing-stations nearer the line. There were not many wounded, though they were coming in, and the Doctor was not for the moment very busy.

We stood on the threshold of a large ward, where we could not, I think, be seen. At the

farther end a serious case was being attended by nurses and surgeons. Everything was passing in silence; and to me it was as if there came from the distant group a tragic message of suffering, possibly death. Then, as we passed lingeringly away, we saw three young officers, all wounded, *running* up from the ambulance at the gate, which had just brought them, and disappearing into one of the wards. The first—a splendid kilted figure—had his head bound up; the others were apparently wounded in the arm. But they seemed to walk on air, and to be quite unconscious that anything was wrong with them. It had been a success, a great success, and they had been in it!

The ambulances were now arriving fast from the field dressing-stations close to the line, and we hurried away, and were soon driving through Poperinghe. Here and there there was a house wrecked with shell-fire. The little town indeed with its picturesque *place* is constantly shelled. But, all the same, life seems to go on as usual. The Poperinghe boy, like

his London brother, hangs on the back of carts; his father and mother come to their door to watch what is going on, or to ask eagerly for news of the counter-attack; and his little brothers and sisters go tripping to school, in short cloaks with the hoods drawn over their heads, as though no war existed. Here and in the country round, poor robbed Belgium is still at home on her own soil, and on the best of terms with the English Army, by which, indeed, this remnant of her prospers greatly. As I have already insisted, the relations everywhere between the British soldier and the French and Belgian populations are among the British—or shall I say the Allied?—triumphs of the war.

Farther on the road a company from a famous regiment, picked men all of them, comes swinging along, fresh from their baths!—life and force in every movement—young Harrys with their beavers on. Then, a house where men have their gas-helmets tested—a very strict and necessary business; and another,

where an ex-Balliol tutor and Army Chaplain keeps open doors for the soldier in his hours of rest or amusement. But we go in search of a safe road to a neighbouring village, where some fresh passes have to be got. Each foot now of the way is crowded with the incidents and appurtenances of war, and war close at hand. An Australian transport base is pointed out, with a wholly Australian staff. "Some of the men," says our guide, "are millionaires." Close by is an aeroplane descending unexpectedly in a field, and a crowd of men rushing to help; and we turn away relieved to see the two aviators walking off unhurt. Meanwhile, I notice a regular game of football going on at a distance, and some carefully written names of bypaths—"Hyde Park Corner," "Piccadilly," "Queen Mary's Road," and the like. The animation, the life of the scene are indescribable.

At the next village the road was crowded both with natives and soldiers to see the German prisoners brought in. Alack! we did not

see them. Ambulances were passing and repassing, the slightly wounded men in cars open at the back, the more serious cases in closed cars, and everywhere the same *va et vient* of lorries and wagons, of staff-cars and motor-cyclists. It was not right for us to add to the congestion in the road. Moreover, the hours were drawing on, and the great sight was still to come. But to have watched those prisoners come in would have somehow rounded off the day!

IV

Our new passes took us to the top of a hill well known to the few onlookers of which this war admits. The motor stopped at a point on the road where a picket was stationed, who examined our papers. Then came a stiff and muddy climb, past a dugout for protection in case of shelling, Captain —— carrying the three gas-helmets. At the top was a flat green space—three or four soldiers playing football

on it!—and an old windmill, and farm-buildings.

We sheltered behind the great beams supporting the windmill, and looked out through them, north and east, over a wide landscape; a plain bordered eastward by low hills, every mile of it, almost, watered by British blood, and consecrate to British dead. As we reached the windmill, as though in sombre greeting, the floating mists on the near horizon seemed to part, and there rose from them a dark, jagged tower, one side of it torn away. It was the tower of Ypres—mute victim!—mute witness to a crime, that, beyond the reparations of our own day, history will avenge through years to come.

A flash!—another!—from what appear to be the ruins at its base. It is the English guns speaking from the lines between us and Ypres; and as we watch we see the columns of white smoke rising from the German lines as the shells burst. There they are, the German lines—along the Messines ridge. We make them

out quite clearly, thanks to a glass and Captain ——'s guidance. Their guns, too, are at work, and a couple of their shells are bursting on our trenches somewhere between Vlamertinghe and Dickebusche. Then the rattle of our machine-guns—as it seems from somewhere close below us, and again the boom of the artillery.

The counter-action is in progress, and we watch what can be seen or guessed of it, in fascination. We are too far off to see what is actually happening between the opposing trenches, but one of the chief fields of past and present battle, scenes which our children and our children's children will go to visit, lie spread out before us. Half the famous sites of the earlier war can be dimly made out between us and Ypres. In front of us is the gleam of the Zillebeke Lake, beyond it Hooge. Hill 60 is in that band of shadow; a little farther east the point where the Prussian Guard was mown down at the close of the first Battle of Ypres; farther south the fields and woods made for ever famous by the charge of the

Household Cavalry, by the deeds of the Worcesters, and the London Scottish, by all the splendid valour of that "thin red line," French and English, cavalry and infantry, which in the first Battle of Ypres withstood an enemy four times as strong, saved France, and thereby England, and thereby Europe. In that tract of ground over which we are looking lie more than 100,000 graves, English and French; and to it the hearts of two great nations will turn for all time. Then if you try to pierce the northern haze, beyond that ruined tower, you may follow in imagination the course of the Yser westward to that Belgian coast where Admiral Hood's guns broke down and scattered the German march upon Dunkirk and Calais; or if you turn south you are looking over the Belfry of Bailleul, towards Neuve Chapelle, and Festubert, and all the fierce fighting-ground round Souchez and the Labyrinth. Once English and French stood linked here in a common heroic defence. Now the English hold all this line firmly from the sea

to the Somme; while the French, with the eyes of the world upon them, are making history, hour by hour, at Verdun.

So to this point we have followed one branch —the greatest—of England's effort; and the mind, when eyes fail, pursues it afresh from its beginnings when we first stood to arms in August, 1914, through what Mr. Buchan has finely called the "rally of the Empire," through the early rush and the rapid growth of the new armies, through the strengthening of Egypt, the disaster of Gallipoli, the seizure of the German Colonies; through all that vast upheaval at home which we have seen in the munition areas; through that steady, and ever-growing organisation on the friendly French soil we have watched in the supply bases. Yet here, for us, it culminates; and here and in the North Sea, we can hardly doubt—whatever may be the diversions in other fields—will be fought, for Great Britain, the decisive battles of the war. As I turn to those dim lines on the Messines ridge, I have come at last to sight of

whither it all moves. There, in those trenches is *The Aggressor*—the enemy who has wantonly broken the peace of Europe, who has befouled civilisation with deeds of lust and blood, between whom and the Allies there can be no peace till the Allies' right arm dictates it. Every week, every day, the British Armies grow, the British troops pour steadily across the Channel, and to the effort of England and her Allies there will be no truce till the righteous end is won.

But the shadows are coming down on the great scene, and with the sound of the guns still in our ears we speed back through the crowded roads to G. H. Q., and these wonderful days are over. Now, all that remains for me is to take you, far away from the armies, into the English homes whence the men fighting here are drawn, and to show you, if I can, very shortly, by a few instances, what rich and poor are doing as individuals to feed the effort of England in this war. What of the *young*, of all classes and opportunities, who have laid down

their lives in this war? What of the mothers who reared them, the schools and universities which sent them forth?—the comrades who are making ready to carry on their work? You ask me as to the *spirit* of the nation—the foundation of all else. Let us look into a few lives, a few typical lives and families, and see.

VI

April 22nd.

DEAR H.

As I begin upon this final letter to you comes the news that the threatened split in the British Cabinet owing to the proposed introduction of general military service has been averted, and that at a Secret Session to be held next Tuesday, April 25th, Ministers will, for the first time, lay before both Houses of Parliament full and complete information—much more full and complete at any rate, than has yet been given—of the "effort" of Great Britain in this world war, what this country is doing in sea-power, in the provision of Armies, in the lending of money to our Allies, in our own shipping service to them, and in our supply to them of munitions, coal, and other war material —including boots and clothing. If, then, our own British Parliament will be for the first time fully apprised next Tuesday of what the

nation has been doing, it is, perhaps, small wonder that you on your side of the Atlantic have not rightly understood the performance of a nation which has, collectively, the same love of "grousing" as the individual British soldier shows in the trenches.

Let me, however, go back and recapitulate a little.

In the first of these letters, I tried, by a rapid "vision" of the Fleet, as I personally saw an important section of it amid the snows of February, to point to the indispensable condition of this "effort," without which it could never have been made, without which it could not be maintained for a day, at the present moment. Since that visit of mine, the power of the Fleet and the effect of the Fleet have strengthened week by week. The blockade of Germany is far more effective than it was three months ago; the evidence of its growing stringency accumulates steadily, and at the same time the British Foreign Office has been anxiously trying, and evidently with much success,

to minimise for neutrals its inevitable difficulties and inconveniences. Meanwhile, as Mr. Asquith will explain next Tuesday, the expenditure on the war, not only on our own needs but on those of our Allies is colossal—terrifying. The most astonishing Budget of English History, demanding a fourth of his income from every well-to-do citizen, has been brought in since I began to write these letters, and quietly accepted. Five hundred millions sterling ($2,500,000,000) have been already lent to our Allies. We are spending at the yearly rate of 600,000,000 sterling ($3,000,000,000) on the Army; 200,000,000 on the Navy as compared with 40,000,000 in 1913; while the Munitions Department is costing about two-thirds as much (400,000,000 sterling) as the rest of the Army, and is employing close upon 2,000,000 workers, one-tenth of them women. The export trade of the country, in spite of submarines and lack of tonnage, is at the moment greater than it was in the corresponding months of 1913.

As to what we have got for our money, Parliament has authorised an Army of 4,000,000 men, and it is on the question of the last half million that England's Effort now turns. Mr. Asquith will explain everything that has been done, and everything that still remains to do, *in camera* to Parliament next Tuesday. But do not, my dear friend, make any mistake! *England will get the men she wants;* and Labour will be in the end just as determined to get them as any other section of the Community. Meanwhile, abroad, while we seem, for the moment, in France to be inactive, we are in reality giving the French at Verdun just that support which they and General Joffre desire, and—it can scarcely be doubted—preparing great things on our own account. In spite of our failure in Gallipoli, and the anxious position of General Townshend's force, Egypt is no longer in danger of attack, if it ever has been; our sea-power has brought a Russian force safely to Marseilles; and the possibilities of British and Russian Collaboration in the East

are rapidly opening out. As to the great and complex war-machine we have been steadily building up on French soil, as I tried to show in my fourth letter, whether in the supply bases, or in the war organisation along the ninety miles of front now held by the British Armies, it would indeed astonish those dead heroes of the Retreat from Mons—could they comes back to see it! We are not satisfied with it yet—hence the unrest in Parliament and the Press—we shall never be satisfied—till Germany has accepted the terms of the Allies. But those who know England best have no doubt whatever as to the temper of the nation which has so far "improvised the impossible," in the setting up of this machine, and means, in the end, *to get out of it what it wants.*

The temper of the nation? In this last letter let me take some samples of it. First—what have the rich been doing? As to money, the figures of the income-tax, the death-duties, and the various war loans are there to show what they have contributed to the State. The

Joint War Committee of the Red Cross and the St. John's Ambulance Association have collected—though not, of course, from the rich only—close on 4,000,000 sterling (between $18,000,000 and $19,000,000), and the Prince of Wales Fund nearly 6,000,000 ($30,000,000). The lavishness of English giving, indeed, in all directions during the last two years, could hardly I think have been outdone. A few weeks ago I walked with the Duke of Bedford through the training and reinforcement camp, about fifteen miles from my own home in the country, which he himself commands and which, at the outbreak of war, he himself built without waiting for public money or War Office contractors, to house and train recruits for the various Bedfordshire regiments. The camp holds 1,200 men, and is ranged in a park where the oaks—still standing—were considered too old by Oliver Cromwell's Commissioners to furnish timber for the English Navy. Besides ample barrack accommodation in comfortable huts, planned so as to satisfy every

demand whether of health or convenience, all the opportunities that Aldershot offers, on a large scale, are here provided in miniature. The model trenches with the latest improvements in plan, revetting, gun-emplacements, sally-ports, and the rest, spread through the sandy soil; the musketry ranges, bombing and bayonet schools are of the most recent and efficient type. And the Duke takes a keen personal interest in every man in training, follows his progress in camp, sees him off to the front, and very often receives him, when wounded, in the perfectly equipped hospital which the Duchess has established in Woburn Abbey itself. Here the old riding-school, tennis-court, and museum, which form a large building fronting the abbey, have been turned into wards as attractive as bright and simple colour, space, flowers, and exquisite cleanliness can make them. The Duchess is herself the Matron in charge, under the War Office, keeps all the records, is up at half past five in the morning, and spends her day in the endless

doing, thinking, and contriving that such a hospital needs. Not very far away stands another beautiful country house, rented by Mr. and Mrs. Whitelaw Reid when they were in England. It also is a hospital, but its owner, Lord Lucas, not a rich man, has now given it irrevocably to the nation for the use of disabled soldiers, together with as much land as may suffice a farm colony chosen from among them. The beautiful hospital of 250 beds at Paignton, in North Devon, run entirely by women of American birth now resident in Great Britain, without any financial aid from the British Government, was another large country house given to the service of the wounded by Mr. Singer. Lady Sheffield's hospital for 25 beds at Alderley Park is an example of how part of a country house with all its green and restful surroundings may be used for those who have suffered in the war, and it has many fellows in all parts of England. Altogether about 700 country houses, large and small, have been offered to the War Office.

But money and houses are the very least part of what the old families, the rich manufacturers, or the educated class generally have offered to their country in this war. Democracy has gone far with us, but it may still be said that the young heir to a great name, to estates with which his family has been connected for generations, and to the accumulated "consideration" to use a French word in a French sense, which such a position almost always carries with it—has a golden time in English life. Difficulties that check others fall away from him; he is smiled upon for his kindred's sake before he makes friends for his own; the world is overkind to his virtues and blind to his faults; he enters manhood indeed as "one of our conquerors"; and it will cost him some trouble to throw away his advantages. Before the war such a youth was the common butt of the Socialist orator. He was the typical "shirker" and "loafer," while other men worked; the parasite bred from the sweat of the poor; the soft, effeminate creature who had

never faced the facts of life and never would. As to his soldiering—the common profession of so many of his kind—that was only another offence in the eyes of politicians like Mr. Keir Hardie. When the class war came, he would naturally be found shooting down the workmen; but for any other war, an ignorant popinjay!—incompetent even at his own trade, and no match whatever for the scientific soldier of the Continent.

Those who knew anything of the Army were well aware long before 1914 that this type of officer—if he still existed, as no doubt he had once existed—had become extraordinarily rare; that since the Boer War, the level of education in the Army, the standard of work demanded, the quality of the relations between officers and men had all steadily advanced. And with regard to the young men of the "classes" in general, those who had to do with them, at school and college, while fully alive to their weaknesses, yet cherished convictions which were more instinct than anything else, as to

what stuff these easy-going, sport-loving fellows might prove to be made of in case of emergency.

Well, the emergency came. These youths of the classes, heirs to titles and estates, or just younger sons of the old squirearchy of England, so far as it still survives, went out in their hundreds, with the old and famous regiments of the British line in the Expeditionary Force, and perished in their hundreds. Forty-seven eldest sons, heirs to English peerages had fallen within a year of the outbreak of war—among them the heirs to such famous houses as Longleat, Petworth, and Castle Ashby—and the names of Grenfell, Hood, Stuart, Bruce, Lister, Douglas Pennant, Worsley, Hay, St. Aubyn, Carington, Annesley, Hicks Beach—together with men whose fathers have played prominent parts in the politics or finance of the last half century. And the first ranks have been followed by what one might almost call a *levée en masse* of those that remained. Their blood has been spilt like water at Ypres and

La Bassée, at Suvla and Helles. Whatever may be said henceforward of these "golden lads" of ours, "shirker" and "loafer" they can never be called again. They have died too lavishly, their men have loved and trusted them too well for that—and some of the working-class leaders, with the natural generosity of English hearts, have confessed it abundantly.

And the professional classes—the intellectuals—everywhere the leading force of the nation—have done just as finely, and of course in far greater numbers. Never shall I forget my visit to Oxford last May—in the height of the summer term, just at that moment when Oxford normally is at its loveliest and fullest, brimming over with young life, the streets crowded with caps and gowns, the river and towing-path alive with the "flannelled fools," who have indeed flung back Rudyard Kipling's gibe—if it ever applied to them—with interest. For they had all disappeared. They were in the trenches, landing at Suvla, garrisoning Egypt, pushing up to Baghdad. The colleges

contained a few forlorn remnants—under age, or medically unfit. The river, on a glorious May day, showed boats indeed, but girls were rowing them. Oriel, the college of Arnold, of Newman, of Cecil Rhodes, was filled with women students, whose own college, Somerville, had become a hospital. The Examination Schools in the High Street were a hospital, and the smell of disinfectants displaced the fragrance of lilac and hawthorn for ever associated in the minds of Oxford's lovers with the summer term. In New College gardens, there were white tents full of wounded. I walked up and down that wide, deserted lawn of St. John's, where Charles I once gathered his Cavaliers, with an old friend, an Oxford tutor of forty years' standing, who said with a despairing gesture, speaking of his pupils: "So many are gone—so *many!*—and the terrible thing is that I can't feel it as I once did—as blow follows blow one seems to have lost the power."

Let me evoke the memory of some of them. From Balliol have gone the two Grenfell

brothers, vehement, powerful souls, by the testimony of those who knew them best, not delightful to those who did not love them, not just, often, to those they did not love, but full of that rich stuff which life matures to all fine uses. The younger fell in the attack on Hooge, July 31st, last year; the elder, Julian, had fallen some months earlier. Julian's verses, composed the night before he was wounded, will be remembered with Rupert Brooke's sonnets, as expressing the inmost passion of the war in great hearts. They were written in the spring weather of April, 1915, and a month later the writer had died of his wounds. With an exquisite felicity and strength the lines run, expressing the strange and tragic joy of the "fighting man" in the spring, which may be his last—in the night heavens—in the woodland trees:

"The woodland trees that stand together
They stand to him each one a friend;
They gently speak in the windy weather;
They guide to valley and ridge's end.

"The kestrel hovering by day
And the little owls that call by night,
Bid him be swift and keen as they
As keen of ear, as swift of sight.

"The blackbird sings to him, 'Brother, brother,
If this be the last song you shall sing,
Sing well, for you may not sing another
Brother, sing.'

"In dreary, doubtful waiting hours,
Before the brazen frenzy starts,
The horses show him nobler powers;—
O patient eyes, courageous hearts!

"And when the burning moment breaks,
And all things else are out of mind
And only Joy of Battle takes
Him by the throat and makes him blind

"Through joy and blindness he shall know
Not caring much to know, that still
Nor lead nor steel shall reach him, so
That it be not the Destined Will.

"The thundering line of battle stands,
And in the air Death moans and sings;
But Day shall clasp him with strong hands,
And Night shall fold him in soft wings."

A young man of another type, inheriting from the Cecils on the one side, and from his

grandfather, the first Lord Selborne, on the other, the best traditions of English Conservatism and English churchmanship — open-eyed, patriotic, devout—has been lost to the nation in Robert A. S. Palmer, the second son of Lord and Lady Selborne, affectionately known to an ardent circle of friends whose hopes were set on him, as "Bobbie Palmer." He has fallen in the Mesopotamian campaign; and of him, as of William Henry Gladstone, the grandson and heir of England's great Liberal Minister, who fell in Flanders a year ago, it may be said, as his Oxford contemporaries said of Sir Philip Sidney,

> Honour and Fame are got about their graves,
> And there sit mourning of each other's loss.

In one of his latest letters, quoted by a friend in a short biography, Robert Palmer wrote:— "Who isn't weary to death of the war? I certainly have been, for over a year; yes, and sorrowful almost unto death over it, at times, as you doubtless have too. But of one thing I

am and always have been sure, that it is worth the cost and any cost there is to come, to prevent Prussianism—which is Anti-Christ—controlling Europe." The following eloquent passage written by an Oxford Fellow and Tutor, in a series of short papers on the losses sustained by Oxford in the war, is understood to refer to Mr. Palmer:—

"To-night the bell tolls in the brain (*haud redituras*) over one of the noblest—if it be not a treason to discriminate—of all the dead one has known who have died for England. Graciousness was in all his doings and in all the workings of his mind. The music and gymnastic whereof Plato wrote, that should attune the body to harmony with the mind, and harmonise all the elements of the mind in a perfect unison, had done their work upon him. He seemed—at any rate, to the eyes of those who loved him, and they were many—to have the perfection of nature's endowment: beauty of mind knit to beauty of body, and all informed by a living spirit of affection, so that his

presence was a benediction, and a matter for thanksgiving that God had made men after this manner. So to speak of him is perhaps to idealise him; but one can only idealise that which suggests the ideal, and at the least he had a more perfect participation in the ideal than falls to the general lot of humanity."

Such he was: and now he too is dead. From the work to which he had gone, thousands of miles away (a work of service, and of his Master's service), he had hastened back to England, and for England he has died. His tutor had once written in his copy of the Vulgate: "*Esto vir fortis, et pugnemus pro populo nostro et pro civitate Dei nostri.*" He was strong; and he fought for both.

Another Oxford man, Gilbert Talbot, a youngest son of the much-loved Bishop of Winchester, will perhaps stand for many, in coming years, as the pre-eminent type of first youth, youth with all its treasure of life and promise unspent, poured out like spikenard in this war at the feet of England. Already as-

sured at Oxford of a brilliant career in politics, a fine speaker, a hard worker, possessing by inheritance the charm of two families, always in the public eye and ear, and no less popular than famous, he had just landed in the United States when the war broke out. He was going round the world with a friend, youth and ambition high within him. He turned back without a moment's hesitation, though soldiering had never been at all attractive to him, and after his training went out to France. He was killed in Flanders in July last. Let me give the story of his identification after death on the battle-field, by his elder brother, Neville, Army Chaplain, and ex-Balliol tutor, as Canon Scott Holland gave it in the *Commonwealth*:—

"The attack had failed. There was never any hope of its succeeding, for the machine-guns of the Germans were still in full play, with their fire unimpaired. The body had to lie there where it had fallen. Only, his brother could not endure to let it lie unhonoured or unblessed. After a day and a half of anxious

searching for exact details, he got to the nearest trench by the 'murdered' wood, which the shells had now smashed to pieces. There he found some shattered Somersets, who begged him to go no farther. But he heard a voice within him bidding him risk it, and the call of the blood drove him on. Creeping out of the far end of the trench, as dusk fell, he crawled through the grass on hands and knees, in spite of shells and snipers, dropping flat on the ground as the flares shot up from the German trenches. And, at last, thirty yards away in the open . . . he knew that he was close on what he sought. Two yards farther, he found it. He could stroke with his hand the fair young head that he knew so well; he could feel for pocket-book and prayer-book, and the badge and the whistle. He could breathe a prayer of benediction . . . and then crawl back on his perilous way in the night, having done all that man could do for the brother whom he had loved so fondly; and enabled, now, to tell those at home that Gilbert was

dead indeed, but that he had died the death that a soldier would love to die, leaving his body the nearest of all who fell, to the trench that he had been told to take."

Again, of Charles Alfred Lister, Lord Ribblesdale's eldest son, an Oxford friend says: "There were almost infinite possibilities in his future." He was twice wounded at the Dardanelles, was then offered a post of importance in the Foreign Office, refused it, and went back to the front—to die. But among the hundreds of memorial notices issued by the Oxford Colleges, the same note recurs and recurs, of unhesitating, uncalculated sacrifice. Older men, and younger men, Don, and undergraduate, lads of nineteen and twenty, and those who were already school-mastering, or practising at the Bar, or in business, they felt no doubts, they made no delays. Their country called, and none failed in that great *Adsum.*

Cambridge of course has the same story to tell. One takes the short, pathetic biographies almost at random from the ever-lengthening

record, contributed by the colleges. Captain J. Lusk, 6th Cameronians, was already Director of an important steel works, engaged in Government business when war broke out, and might have honourably claimed exemption. Instead he offered himself at once on mobilisation, and went out with his battalion to France last spring. On the 15th of June, at Festubert, he was killed in volunteering to bring what was left of a frightfully battered battalion out of action. "What seems to me my duty as an officer," he once wrote to a friend, "is to carry my sword across the barriers of death clean and bright." "This," says the friend who writes the notice, "he has done." Lieutenant Le Blanc Smith, of Trinity, machine-gun officer, was struck in the forehead by a sniper's bullet while reconnoitring. His General and brother officers write:

He was a very fine young officer. . . . Every one loved him. . . . His men would do anything for him. . . .

And the sergeant of his machine-gun brigade says:

Although only a non-commissioned officer myself, I feel I have lost my brother, because he was so awfully good and kind to me and us all.

Lieutenant Hamilton, aged twenty-five, says in a last letter to his father:

Just a line while the beginning of the great battle is going on. It is wonderful how peaceful one feels amid it all. Any moment one may be put out of action, but one does not worry. That quiet time alone with God at the Holy Communion was most comforting.

Immediately after writing these words, the writer fell in action. Captain Clarke, a famous Cambridge athlete, President of the C. U. A. C., bled to death—according to one account—from a frightful wound received in the advance near Hooge on September 25th. His last recorded act—the traditional act of the dying soldier!—was to give a drink from his flask to a wounded private. Of the general action of Cambridge men, the Master of Christ's writes: "Nothing has been more splendid than the way the young fellows have come forward; not only the athletes and the healthy, but in all cases the most unlikely men have rushed to the front,

and have done brilliantly. The mortality, however, has been appalling. In an ordinary way one loses one killed to eight or nine wounded; but in this war the number of Cambridge men killed and missing practically equals the number of wounded." Of the effect upon the University an eye-witness says: "Eighty per cent of the College rooms are vacant. Rows and rows of houses in Cambridge are to let. All the Junior Fellows are on service in one capacity or another, and a great many of the Seniors are working in Government Offices or taking school posts"—so that the school education of the Country may be carried on. Altogether, nearly 12,000 Cambridge men are serving; 980 have been wounded; 780 have been killed; 92 are missing.

As to one's friends and kinsfolk, let me recall the two gallant grandsons of my dear old friend and publisher, George Murray Smith, the original publisher of *Jane Eyre*, friend of Charlotte Brontë, and creator of the *Dictionary of National Biography*. The elder one,

who had just married before going out, fought all through the retreat from Mons, and fell in one of the early actions on the Flanders front. "He led us all the way," said one of his men afterwards. All the way!—All through the immortal rear-guard actions of August—only to fall, when the tide had turned, and the German onslaught on Paris had been finally broken! "In all my soldiering," writes a brother officer, "I have never seen a warmer feeling between men and their officer." "Was he not," asks a well-known Eton master, "that tall, smiling, strong, gentle-mannered boy at White-Thomson's?"—possessing an "affectionate regard and feeling for others which boys as boys, especially if strong and popular, don't always, or indeed often possess." The poor parents were uncertain as to his fate for many weeks, but he finally died of his wounds in a hospital behind the German lines. Then, little more than six months later came the second blow. Geoffrey, the younger brother, aged nineteen, fell on September 29th, near Vermelles. Noth-

ing could be more touching than the letters from officers and men about this brave, sweet-tempered boy. "Poor old regiment!" writes the Colonel to the lad's father—"we were badly knocked about, and I brought out only 3 officers and 375 men, but they did magnificently, and it was thanks to officers like your son, who put the honour of the regiment before all thought of fatigue or personal danger. Such a gallant lad! We all loved him." A private, the boy's soldier-servant, who fought with him, writes: "I wish you could have seen him in that trench. . . . All the men say that he deserved the V. C. . . . I don't know if we are going back to those trenches any more, but if we do, I am going to try and lay Mr. Geoffrey to rest in some quiet place. . . . I cannot bear to think that I shall not be able to be with him any more."

But how they crowd upon the mind—the "unreturning brave"! Take our friends and neighbours in this quiet Hertfordshire country. All round us the blows have fallen—again

and again the only son—sometimes two brothers out of three—the most brilliant—the best beloved. And I see still the retreating figure of a dear nephew of my own, as he vanished under the trees waving his hand to us in March last. A boy made of England's best—who after two years in Canada, and at the beginning of what must have been a remarkable career, heard the call of the Mother Country, and rushed home at once. He was transferred to an English regiment, and came to say goodbye to us in March. It was impossible to think of Christopher's coming to harm—such life and force, such wisdom and character also, in his strong, handsome face and thoughtful eyes! We talked of the future of Canada—not much of the war. Then he vanished, and I could not feel afraid. But one night in May, near Bailleul, he went out with a listening party between the trenches, was shot through both legs by a sniper, and otherwise injured—carried back to hospital, and after a few hours' vain hope, sank peacefully into eternity, knowing

only that he had done his duty and fearing nothing. "Romance and melodrama," says Professor Gilbert Murray, in one of the noblest and most moving utterances of the war, "were once a memory—broken fragments living on of heroic ages in the past. We live no longer upon fragments and memories, we have entered ourselves upon an heroic age. . . . As for me personally, there is one thought that is always with me—the thought that other men are dying for me, better men, younger, with more hope in their lives, many of them men whom I have taught and loved." The orthodox Christian "will be familiar with that thought of One who loved you dying for you. I would like to say that now I seem to be familiar with the thought that something innocent, something great, something that loved me, is dying, and is dying daily for me. That is the sort of community we now are—a community in which one man dies for his brother; and underneath all our hatreds, our little anger and quarrels, we *are* brothers, who are ready

to seal our brotherhood with blood. It is for us these men are dying—for the women, the old men, and the rejected men—and to preserve civilisation and the common life which we are keeping alive, or building."

So much for the richer and the educated class. As to the rank and file, the Tommies who are fighting and dying for England in precisely the same spirit as those who have had ten times their opportunities in this unequal world, I have seen them myself within a mile of the trenches, marching quietly up through the fall of the March evening to take their places in that line, where, every night, however slack the fighting, a minimum of so many casualties per mile, so many hideous or fatal injuries by bomb or shell fire, is practically invariable. Not the conscript soldiers of a military nation, to whom the thought of fighting has been perforce familiar from childhood! Men, rather, who had never envisaged fighting, to whom it is all new, who at bottom, however firm their will, or wonderful their

courage, hate war, and think it a loathsome business. "I do not find it easy," writes a chaplain at the front who knows his men and has shared all the dangers of their life—"to give incidents and sayings. I could speak of the courage of the wounded brought in after battle. How many times has one heard them telling the doctor to attend to others before themselves! I could tell you of a very shy and nervous boy who, after an attack, dug, himself alone, with his intrenching tool, a little trench, under continuous fire, up which trench he afterwards crept backwards and forwards carrying ammunition to an advanced post; or of another who sat beside a wounded comrade for several hours under snipers' fire, and somehow built him a slight protection until night fell and rescue came. Such incidents are merely specimens of thousands which are never known. Indeed it is the heroism of *all* the men *all* the time which has left the most lasting impression on my mind after thirteen months at the war. No one can conceive the strain

which the daily routine of trench life entails, unless one has been among the men. They never show the slightest sign of unwillingness, and they do what they are told when and where they are told without questioning; no matter what the conditions or dangers, they come up smiling and cheery through it all—full of 'grouse,' perhaps, but that is the soldier's privilege! . . . It is, I think, what we all are feeling and are so proud of—this unbreakable spirit of self-sacrifice in the daily routine of trench warfare. We are proud of it because it is the highest of all forms of self-sacrifice, for it is not the act of a moment when the blood is up or the excitement of battle is at fever heat; but it is demanded of the soldier, day in and day out, and shown by him coolly and deliberately, day in and day out, with death always at hand. We are proud of it, too, because it is so surely a sign of the magnificent '*moral*' of our troops—and *moral* is going to play a very leading part as the war proceeds. . . . What is inspiring this splen-

did disregard of self is partly the certainty that the Cause is Right; partly, it is a hidden joy of conscience which makes them know that they would be unhappy if they were not doing their bit—and partly (I am convinced of this, too,) it is a deepening faith in the Founder of their Faith Whom so many appreciate and value as never before, because they realise that even He has not shirked that very mill of suffering through which they are now passing themselves."

A few days ago, I accompanied a woman official distributing some leaflets on behalf of a Government department, in some visits to families living in a block of model dwellings somewhere in South London. We called on nine families. In every single case the man of the family had gone, or was expecting to go, to the war; except in one case, where a man who, out of pure patriotism and at great personal difficulty had joined the Volunteer Reserve at the outbreak of war, had strained his heart in trench-digging and was now medi-

cally unfit, to his own bitter disappointment. There was some grumbling in the case of one young wife that her husband should be forced to go before the single men whom she knew; but in the main the temper that showed itself bore witness both to the feeling and the intelligence that our people are bringing to bear on the war. One woman said her husband was a sergeant in a well-known regiment. He thought the world of his men, and whenever one was killed, he must be at the burying. "He can't bear, you know"—she added shyly —"they should feel alone." She had three brothers-in-law "out" — one recently killed. One was an ambulance driver under the R. A. M. C. He had five small children, but had volunteered. "He doesn't say much about the war, except that 'Tommies are wonderful. They never complain.' " She notices a change in his character. He was always good to his wife and children—"but now he's splendid!" The brother of another woman had been a jockey in Belgium, had liked the country and

the people. When war broke out he "felt he must fight for them." He came home at once and enlisted. Another brother had been a stoker on a war-ship at the Dardanelles, and was in the famous landing of April 25. Bullets "thick and fast like hailstorm. Terrible times collecting the dead! Her brother had worked hard forming burial parties. Was now probably going to the Tigris. Wrote jolly letters!"

Then there was the little woman born and bred in the Army, with all the pride of the Army—a familiar type. Husband a sergeant in the Guards—was gymnastic instructor at a northern town—and need not have gone to the war, but felt "as a professional soldier" he ought to go. Three brothers in the Army—one a little drummer-boy of sixteen, badly wounded in the retreat from Mons. Her sailor brother had died—probably from exposure, in the North Sea. The most cheerful, plucky little creature! "We are Army people, and must expect to fight."

Well—you say you "would like America to visualise the effort, the self-sacrifice of the English men and women who are determined to see this war through." There was, I thought, a surprising amount of cheerful effort, of *understanding* self-sacrifice in those nine homes, where my companion's friendly talk drew out the family facts without difficulty. And I am convinced that if I had spent days instead of hours in following her through the remaining tenements in these huge and populous blocks the result would have been practically the same. *The nation is behind the war, and behind the Government*—solidly determined to win this war, and build a new world after it.

As to the work of our women, I have described something of it in the munitions area, and if this letter were not already too long, I should like to dwell on much else—the army of maidens, who, as V. A. D.'s (members of Voluntary Aid Detachments), trained by the Red Cross, have come trooping from England's most luxurious or comfortable homes,

and are doing invaluable work in hundreds of hospitals; to begin with, the most menial scrubbing and dish-washing, and by now the more ambitious and honourable—but not more indispensable—tasks of nursing itself. In this second year of the war, the first army of V. A. D.'s, now promoted, has everywhere been succeeded by a fresh levy, aglow with the same eagerness and the same devotion as the first. Or I could dwell on the women's hospitals—especially the remarkable hospital in Endell Street, entirely officered by women; where some hundreds of male patients accept the surgical and medical care of women doctors, and adapt themselves to the light and easy discipline maintained by the women of the staff, with entire confidence and grateful goodwill. To see a woman dentist at work on a soldier's mouth, and a woman quartermaster presiding over her stores, and managing, besides, everything pertaining to the lighting, heating, and draining of the hospital, is one more sign of these changed and changing times.

The work done by the Scottish Women's Hospital in Serbia will rank as one of the noblest among the minor episodes of the war. The magnificent work of British nurses, everywhere, I have already spoken of. And everywhere, too, among the camps in England and abroad, behind the fighting lines, or at the great railway-stations here or in France, through which the troops pass backwards and forwards, hundreds of women have been doing ardent yet disciplined service—giving long hours in crowded canteens or Y. M. C. A. huts to just those small kindly offices, which bring home to the British soldier, more effectively than many things more ambitious, what the British nation feels towards him. The war has put an end, so far as the richer class is concerned, to the busy idleness and all the costly make-believes of peace. No one gives "dinner-parties" in the old sense any more; the very word "reception" is dying out. The high wages that munition-work has brought to the women of the working class, show themselves, no doubt,

in some foolish dressing. "You should see the hats round here on a Saturday!" said the Manager of a Midland factory. But I am bound to say he spoke of it proudly. The hats were for him a testimony to the wages paid by his firm; and he would probably have argued, on the girls' part, that after the long hours and hard work of the week, the hats were a perfectly legitimate "fling," and human nature must out. Certainly the children of the workers are better fed and better clothed, which speaks so far well for the mothers; and recent Government inquiries seem to show that in spite of universal employment, and high wages, the drunkenness of the United Kingdom as a whole is markedly less, while at the same time — uncomfortable paradox!— the amount of alcohol consumed is greater. One hears stories of extravagance among those who have been making "war profits," but they are less common this year than last; and as to my own experience, all my friends are wearing their old clothes, and the West End dressmakers, poor

things, in view of a large section of the public which regards it as a crime "to buy anything new" are either shutting down till better days, or doing a greatly restricted business. Taxation has grown much heavier, and will be more and more severely felt. Yet very few grumble, and there is a general and determined cutting down of the trappings and appendages of life, which is to the good of us all.

Undoubtedly, there is a very warm and widespread feeling among us that in this war the women of the nation have done uncommonly well! You will remember a similar stir of grateful recognition in America after your War of Secession, connected with the part played in the nursing and sanitation of the war by the women of the Northern States. The feeling here may well have an important social and political influence when the war is over; especially among the middle and upper classes. It may be counter-balanced to some extent in the industrial class, by the disturbance and anxiety caused in many trades, but

especially in the engineering trades, by that great invasion of women I have tried to describe. But that the war will leave *some* deep mark on that long evolution of the share of women in our public life, which began in the teeming middle years of the last century, is, I think, certain.

May 2nd.—So I come to the end of the task you set me!—with what gaps and omissions to look back upon, no one knows so well as myself. This lettter starts on its way to you at a critical moment for your great country, when the issue between the United States and Germany is still unsettled. What will happen? Will Germany give way? If not, what sort of relations will shape themselves, and how quickly, between the Central Empires and America? To express myself on this great matter is no part of my task; although no English man or woman but will watch its development with a deep and passionate interest. What may be best for you, we cannot tell; the military and political bearings of a breach be-

tween the United States and Germany on our own fortunes are by no means clear to us. But what we *do* want, in any case, is the sympathy, the moral support and co-operation of your people. We have to thank you for a thousand generosities to our wounded; we bless you—as comrades with you in that old Christendom which even this war shall not destroy—for what you have done in Belgium—but we want you to understand the heart of England in this war, and not to be led away by the superficial difficulties and disputes that no great and free nation escapes in time of crisis. Sympathy with France—France, the invaded, the heroic—is easy for America—for us all. She is the great tragic figure of the war—the whole world does her homage. We are not invaded—and so less tragic, less appealing. But we are fighting the fight which is the fight of all freemen everywhere—against the wantonness of military power, against the spirit that tears up treaties and makes peaceful agreement between nations impossible—against a

cruelty and barbarism in war which brings our civilisation to shame. We have a right to your sympathy—you who are the heirs of Washington and Lincoln, the trustees of liberty in the New World as we, with France, are in the Old. You are concerned—you must be concerned—in the triumph of the ideals of ordered freedom and humane justice over the ideals of unbridled force and ruthless cruelty, as they have been revealed in this war, to the horror of mankind. The nation that can never, to all time, wash from its hands the guilt of the Belgium crime, the blood of the *Lusitania* victims, of the massacres of Louvain and Dinant, of Aerschot and Termonde, may some day deserve our pity. To-day it has to be met and conquered by a will stronger than its own, in the interests of civilisation itself.

This last week, at the close of which I am despatching this final letter, has been a sombre week for England. It has seen the squalid Irish rising, with its seven days' orgy of fire and bloodshed in Dublin; it has seen the sur-

render at Kut of General Townshend and his starving men; it has seen also a strong demonstration in Parliament of discontent with certain phases of the conduct of the war. And yet, how shall I convey to you the paradox that we in England—our soldiers at the front, and instructed opinion at home—have never been so certain of ultimate victory as we now are? It is the big facts that matter: the steady growth of British resources, in men and munitions, toward a maximum which we—and Russia—are only approaching, while that of the Central Empires is past; the deepening unity of an Empire which is being forged anew by danger and trial, and by the spirit of its sons all over the world—a unity against which the Irish outrage, paid for by German money, disavowed by all that is truly Ireland, Unionist or Nationalist, and instantly effaced, as a mere demonstration, by the gallantry at the same moment of Irish soldiers in the battle-line—lifts its treacherous hand in vain; the increasing and terrible pressure of the British block-

ade of Germany, equivalent, as some one has lately said, every twenty-four hours that it is maintained, to a successful action in the field; the magnificent resistance of an indomitable France; the mounting strength of a reorganised Russia. This island-state—let me repeat it with emphasis—was not prepared for, and had no expectation of a Continental war, such as we are now fighting. The fact cries aloud from the records of the struggle; it will command the ear of history; and it acquits us for ever from the guilt of the vast catastrophe. But Great Britain has no choice now but to fight to the end—and win. She knows it, and those who disparage her are living in a blind world. As to the difficulty of the task—as to our own failures and mistakes in learning how to achieve it—we have probably fewer illusions than those who criticise us. *But we shall do it —or perish.*

May 5th.—Since the preceding lines were written, the "Military Service Bill" bringing

to the Colours "every British male subject" between the ages of 18 and 41, except when legally exempted, has passed the House of Commons by an overwhelming majority, and will be law immediately. And the Prime Minister informed Parliament three days ago, that "the total naval and military effort of the Empire since the beginning of the war exceeds five million men."

With these two facts, these Letters may fitly close. Those who know England best, her history, and the temperament of her people, will best appreciate what they mean.

VII

AN EPILOGUE

August 16, 1916.

I

It is now three months since I finished the six preceding Letters, written in response to an urgent call from America; nor did I then anticipate any renewal of my work. But while a French translation of the six Letters has been passing through the Press, an appeal has been made to me from France to add an Epilogue, or supplementary Letter, briefly recapitulating the outstanding facts or events which in those three months have marked the British share in the war, and played their part in the immense transformation of the general outlook which has taken place during those months. Not an easy task! One thinks first of one's own inadequacy; and then remembers, as before, that one is a unit in a nation under

orders. I must therefore do what I can. And perhaps other readers, also, of this little book, in America and England, as they look back over the ever-changing scene of the war, will not find this renewed attempt to summarise Britain's part in it as it has developed up to the present date (August 16, 1916) unwelcome. The outstanding facts of the last three months, as I see them, are, for Great Britain:—

1. The immense increase in the output of British Munitions of War;

2. The Naval Battle of Jutland;

3. The Allied offensive on the Somme.

The first and third of these events are, of course, so far as the latter concerns Great Britain, the natural and logical outcome of that "England's Effort" of which I tried—how imperfectly!—to give a connected account three months ago.

At that time the ever-mounting British effort, though it had reached colossal dimensions, though everybody aware of it was full of a

steadily growing confidence as to its final result, had still to be tested by those greater actions to which it was meant to lead. After the local failures at the Dardanelles, and in Mesopotamia, Great Britain was again, for a time, everywhere on the defensive, though it was a very vigorous and active defensive; and the magnificent stand made by the French at Verdun was not only covering France herself with glory, and kindling the hearts of all who love her throughout the world, but under its shield the new armies of Great Britain were still being steadily perfected, and wonderfully armed; time was being given to Russia for reorganisation and re-equipment, and time was all she wanted; while Germany, vainly dashing her strength in men and guns against the heights of Verdun, in the hope of provoking her enemies on the Western front to a premature offensive, doomed to exhaustion before it had achieved its end, was met by the iron resolve of both the French and British Governments, advised by the French and British

Commanders in the field, to begin that offensive only at their own time and place, when the initiative was theirs, and everything was ready.

But the scene has greatly altered. Let me take Munitions first. In February, it will be remembered by those who have read the preceding Letters, I was a visitor, by the kindness of the Ministry of Munitions, then in Mr. Lloyd George's hands, to a portion of the munitions field—in the Midlands, on the Tyne, and on the Clyde. At that moment, Great Britain, as far as armament was concerned, was in the mid-stream of a gigantic movement which had begun in the summer of 1915, set going by the kindling energy of Mr. Lloyd George, and seconded by the roused strength of a nation which was not the industrial pioneer of the whole modern world for nothing, however keenly others, during the last half-century, have pressed upon—or in some regions passed—her. Everywhere I found new workshops already filled with workers, a large proportion of them women, already turning out a mass

of shell which would have seemed incredible to soldiers and civilians alike during the first months of the war; while the tale of howitzers, trench-mortars, machine-guns, and the rest, was running up week by week, in the vast extensions already added to the other works. But everywhere, too, I saw huge, empty workshops, waiting for their machines, or just setting them up; and everywhere the air was full of rumours of the new industrial forces—above all, of the armies of women—that were to be brought to bear. New towns were being built for them; their workplaces and their tools were being got ready for them, as in that vast filling factory—or rather town—on the Clyde which I described in my third Letter. But in many quarters they were not yet there; only one heard, as it were, the tramp of their advancing feet.

But to-day! Those great empty workshops that I saw in February, in the making, or the furnishing, are now full of workers and machines; and thousands like them all over the

country. Last night (Aug. 15), the new Minister of Munitions, Mr. Montagu, who, a few weeks ago, succeeded Mr. Lloyd George, now Minister for War, rendered an account of his department up to date, which amazed even the House of Commons, and will surely stir the minds of men throughout the British Empire with a just and reasonable pride. The "effete" and "degenerate" nation has roused herself indeed!

Here is the bare résumé of the Minister's statement:—

Ammunition.—The British output of ammunition at the beginning of the war was intended for an army of 200,000 men.

Naturally, the output rose steadily throughout the first year of war.

But—the same output which in 1914-15 took 12 months to produce could now be produced—

As to	18-pounder ammunition,	in 3 weeks
"	Field howitzer "	in 2 weeks
"	Medium gun and howitzer ammunition,	in 11 days
"	Heavy shell,	in 4 days

We are sending over to France *every week* as much as the whole pre-war stock of land service ammunition in the country.

As to *guns,* I would ask my readers to turn back to the second and third chapters in this little book, which show something of the human side and the daily detail of this great business, and then to look at this summary:—

Every month, now, we are turning out nearly twice as many big guns as were in existence for land service—*i. e.,* not naval guns—when the Ministry of Munitions came into being (June, 1915).

Between June, 1915, and June, 1916, the monthly output of *heavy guns* has increased 6-*fold*—and the present output will soon be doubled.

For every 100 *eighteen-pounders* turned out in the first 10 months of the war, we are now turning out 500.

We are producing 18 times as many *machine-guns.*

Of *rifles*—the most difficult of all war material to produce quickly in large quantities—our weekly home production is now 3 times as great as it was a year ago. We are supplying our Army overseas with rifles and machine-guns entirely from home sources.

Of *small-arms ammunition* our output is 3 times as great as a year ago.

We are producing 66 times as much *high explosive* as at the beginning of 1915; and our output of *bombs* is 33 times as great as it was last year.

At the same time, what is Great Britain doing *for her Allies?*

The loss of her Northern Provinces, absorbed by the German invasion, has deprived France of three-quarters of her steel. We are now sending to France *one-third of the whole British production of shell-steel.*

We are also supplying the Allies with the *constituents of high explosive* in very large quantities, prepared by our National factories.

We are sending to the Allies *millions of tons of coal and coke every month,* large quantities of machinery, and 20 per cent. of our whole production of machine tools (indispensable to shell manufacture).

We are supplying Russia with millions of pairs of Army boots.

And in the matter of ammunition, we have not only enormously increased the quantity produced—we have greatly improved its quality. The testimony of the French experts—themselves masters in these arts of death—as conveyed through M. Thomas, is emphatic. The new British heavy guns are "admirably made"—"most accurate"—"most efficient."

Meanwhile a whole series of chemical problems with regard to high explosives have been undertaken and solved by Lord Moulton's department. If it was ever true that science was neglected by the War Office, it is certainly

true no longer; and the soldiers at the front, who have to make practical use of what our scientific chemists and our explosive factories at home are producing, are entirely satisfied.

For that, as Mr. Montagu points out, is the sole and supreme test. How has the vast activity of the new Ministry of Munitions—an activity which the nation owes—let me repeat it—to the initiative, the compelling energy, of Mr. Lloyd George—affected our armies in the field?

The final answer to that question is not yet. The Somme offensive is still hammering at the German gates; I shall presently give an outline of its course from its opening on July 1st down to the present. But meanwhile what can be said is this.

The expenditure of ammunition which enabled us to sweep through the German first lines, in the opening days of this July, almost with ease, was colossal beyond all precedent. The total amount of heavy guns and ammunition manufactured by Great Britain in the

first ten months of the war, from August, 1914, to June 1, 1915, would not have kept the British bombardment on the Somme going *for a single day.* That gives some idea of it.

Can we keep it up? The German papers have been consoling themselves with the reflection that so huge an effort must have exhausted our supplies. On the contrary, says Mr. Montagu. *The output of the factories, week by week, now covers the expenditure in the field.* No fear now, that as at Loos, as at Neuve Chapelle, and as on a thousand other smaller occasions, British success in the field should be crippled and stopped by shortage of gun and shell!

By whom has this result been brought about? By that army of British workmen—and workwomen—which Mr. Lloyd George in little more than one short year has mobilised throughout the country. The Ministry of Munitions is now employing *three millions and a half of workers*—(a year ago it was not much more than a million and a half)—of whom 400,000

are women; and the staff of the Ministry has grown from 3,000—the figure given in my earlier letters—to 5,000, just as that army of women, which has sprung as it were out of the earth at the call of the nation, has almost doubled since I wrote in April last. Well may the new Minister say that our toilers in factory and forge have had some share in the glorious recent victories of Russia, Italy, and France! Our men and our women have contributed to the re-equipment of those gallant armies of Russia, which, a month or six weeks earlier than they were expected to move, have broken up the Austrian front, and will soon be once more in Western Poland, perhaps in East Prussia! The Italian Army has drawn from our workshops and learnt from our experiments. The Serbian Army has been re-formed and re-fitted.

Let us sum up. The Germans, with years of preparation behind them, made this war a war of machines. England, in that as in other matters, was taken by surprise. But our old

and proud nation, which for generations led the machine industry of the world, as soon as it realised the challenge—and we were slow to realise it!—met it with an impatient and a fierce energy which is every month attaining a greater momentum and a more wonderful result. The apparently endless supply of munitions which now feeds the British front, and the *comparative* lightness of the human cost at which the incredibly strong network of the German trenches on their whole first line system was battered into ruin, during the last days of June and the first days of July, 1916:—it is to effects like these that all that vast industrial effort throughout Great Britain, of which I saw and described a fragment three months ago, has now steadily and irresistibly brought us.

II

This then is perhaps the first point to notice in the landscape of the war, as we look back on the last three months. For on it everything

else, Naval and Military, depends:—on the incredibly heightened output of British workshops, in all branches of war material, which has been attained since the summer of last year. In it, as I have just said, we see an *effect* of a great cause—*i. e.,* of the "effort" made by Great Britain, since the war broke out, to bring her military strength in men and munitions to a point, sufficient, in combination with the strength of her Allies, for victory over the Central Powers, who after long and deliberate preparation had wantonly broken the European peace. The "effort" was for us a new one, provoked by Germany, and it will have far-reaching civil consequences when the war is over.

In the great Naval victory now known as the Battle of Jutland, on the other hand, we have a fresh demonstration on a greater scale than ever before, of that old, that root fact, without which indeed the success of the Allied effort in other directions would be impossible

—*i. e., the overwhelming strength of the British Navy,* and its mastery of the Sea.

In a few earlier pages of this book, I have described a visit which the British Admiralty allowed me to make in February last to a portion of the Fleet, then resting in a northern harbour. On that occasion, at the Vice-Admiral's luncheon-table, there sat beside me on my right, a tall spare man with the intent face of one to whom life has been a great and strenuous adventure, accepted in no boyish mood, but rather in the spirit of the scientific explorer, pushing endlessly from one problem to the next, and passionate for all experience that either unveils the world, or tests himself. We talked of the war, and my projected journey. "I envy you!" he said, his face lighting up. "I would give anything to see our Army in the field." My neighbour was Rear-Admiral Sir Robert Arbuthnot, commanding the First Cruiser Squadron, who went down with his flagship H.M.S. *Defence,* in the Battle of Jutland, on the 31st of May last, while passing

between the British and German fleets, under a very heavy fire. "It is probable," said Admiral Jellicoe's despatch, "that Sir Robert Arbuthnot, during his engagement with the enemy's light cruisers, and in his desire to complete their destruction, was not aware of the approach of the enemy's heavy ships, owing to the mist, until he found himself in close proximity to the main fleet, and before he could withdraw his ships, they were caught under a heavy fire and disabled." So, between the fleets of Germany and England, amid the mists of the May evening, and the storm and smoke of battle, my courteous neighbour of three months before found, with all his shipmates, that grave in the "unharvested sea" which England never forgets to honour, and from which no sailor shrinks. At the same luncheon-table were two other Admirals and many junior Officers, who took part in the same great action; and looking back upon it, and upon the notes which I embodied in my first Letter, I see more vividly than ever how

every act and thought of those brave and practised men, among whom I passed those few—to me—memorable hours, were conditioned by an intense *expectation,* that trained prevision of what must come, which, in a special degree, both stirs and steadies the mind of the modern sailor.

But one thing perhaps they had not foreseen—that by a combination of mishaps in the first reporting of the battle, the great action, which has really demonstrated, once and for all, the invincible supremacy of Great Britain at sea, which has reduced the German Fleet to months of impotence, put the invasion of these islands finally out of the question, and enabled the British blockade to be drawn round Germany with a yet closer and sterner hand, was made to appear, in the first announcements of it, almost a defeat. The news of our losses —our heavy losses—came first—came almost alone. The Admiralty, with the stern conscience of the British official mind, announced them as they came in—bluntly—with little or

no qualification. A shock of alarm went through England! For what had we paid so sore a price? Was the return adequate, and not only to our safety, but to our prestige?

There were a few hours when both Great Britain—outside the handful of men who knew—and her friends throughout the world, hung on the answer. Meanwhile the German lie, which converted a defeat for Germany into a "victory," got at least twenty-four hours' start, and the Imperial Chancellor made quick and sturdy use of it when he extracted a War Loan of £600,000,000 from a deluded and jubilant Reichstag. Then the news came in from one quarter after another of the six-mile battle-line, from one unit after another of the greatest sea-battle Britain had ever fought, and by the 3rd or 4th of June, England, drawing half-ironic breath over her own momentary misgiving, had realised the truth—first—that the German Fleet on the 31st had only escaped total destruction by the narrowest margin, and by the help of mist and darkness; secondly—

that its losses were, relatively far greater, and in all probability, absolutely, greater than our own; thirdly — that after the British battle-fleet had severed the German navy from its base, the latter had been just able, under cover of darkness, to break round the British ships, and fly hard to shelter, pursued by our submarines and destroyers through the night, till it arrived at Wilhelmshaven a battered and broken host, incapable at least for months to come of any offensive action against Great Britain or her Allies. Impossible henceforth —for months to come—to send a German squadron sufficiently strong to harass Russia in the Baltic! Impossible to interfere successfully with the passage of Britain's new armies across the seas! Impossible to dream any longer of invading English coasts! The British Fleet holds the North Sea more strongly than it has ever held it; and behind the barbed-wire defences of Wilhelmshaven or Heligoland the German Fleet has been nursing its wounds.

Some ten weeks have passed, and as these

results have become plain to all the world, the German lie, or what remained of it, has begun to droop, even in the country of its birth. "Do not let us suppose," says Captain Persius—the most honest of German naval critics, in a recent article—"that we have shaken the sea-power of England. That would be foolishness." While Mr. Balfour, the most measured, the most veracious of men, speaking only a few days ago to the representatives of the Dominion Parliaments, who have been visiting England, says quietly—"the growth of our Navy, since the outbreak of war, which has gone on, and which at this moment is still going on, is something of which I do not believe the general public has the slightest conception."

For the general public has, indeed, but vague ideas of what is happening day by day and week by week in the great shipyards of the Clyde, the Tyne, and the Mersey. But there, all the same, the workmen—and workwomen—of Great Britain—(for women are taking an ever-increasing share in the lighter tasks of

naval engineering)—are adding incessantly to the sea-power of this country, acquiescing in a Government control, a loosening of trade custom, a dilution and simplification of skilled labour, which could not have been dreamt of before the war. At the same time they are meeting the appeal of Ministers to give up or postpone the holidays they have so richly earned, for the sake of their sons and brothers in the trenches, with a dogged "aye, aye!" in which there is a note of profound understanding, of invincible and personal determination, but rarely heard in the early days of the war.

III

So much for the Workshops and the Navy. Now before I turn to the New Armies and the Somme offensive, let us look for a moment at the present facts of British War Finance. By April last, the date of my sixth Letter, we had raised 2,380 millions sterling, for the purposes of the war; we had lent 500 millions to our

Allies, and we were spending about 5 millions a day on the war. According to a statement recently made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer (August 10), by March next our debt will have risen to 3,440 millions sterling, 1,060 millions more than it stood at in March last; our advances to our Allies will have increased to 800 millions, while our daily war expenditure remains about the same.

Mr. McKenna's tone in announcing these figures was extraordinarily cheerful. "We have every reason," he said, amid the applause of the House of Commons—"to be proud of the manner in which British credit has stood the strain." The truth is that by March next, at the present rate of expenditure, our total indebtedness (deducting the advances to our Allies) will almost exactly equal "one year's national income," *i. e.*, the aggregate of the income of every person in the country. But if a man having an income of £5,000 a year, were to owe a total of £5,000, we should not consider his position very serious. "We shall

collect a revenue in one year equal to 20 per cent. of the whole debt (*i. e.,* 522 millions sterling), and we shall be able to pay, *out of existing taxation,* the interest on the debt, and a considerable sinking-fund, and shall still have left a large margin *for the reduction of taxation*"—words which left a comfortable echo in the ears of the nation. Meanwhile British trade—based on British sea-power—has shown extraordinary buoyancy, the exports steadily increasing; so that the nation, in the final words of the Chancellor, feels "no doubt whatever that we shall be able to maintain our credit to the end of the war, *no matter how long it may last.*"

But do not let it be supposed that this huge revenue is being raised without sacrifice, *without effort.* It means—for the present—as I have already pointed out, the absorption by the State of five shillings in the pound from the income of every citizen, above a moderate minimum, and of a lesser but still heavy tax from those below that minimum; it means new

and increased taxation in many directions; and, as a consequence, heavy increases in the cost of living; it means sharply diminished spending for large sections of our population, and serious pinching for our professional and middle classes.

But the nation, as a whole, makes no lament. We look our taxes in the face, and we are beginning to learn how to save. We have our hearts fixed on the future; and we have counted the cost.

The money then is no difficulty. Our resisting power, our prosperity even, under the blows of war, have been unexpectedly great.

But what are we getting for our money?

In the case of the Navy, the whole later course of the war, no less than the Battle of Jutland, has shown what the British Navy means to the cause of the Allies. It is as I have said, the root fact in the war; and in the end, it will be the determining fact; although, of itself, it cannot defeat Germany *as we must defeat her;* at any rate in any reasonable time.

Then as to the Army. Take first of all the administrative side. To what—in the last four months—has come that wonderful system of organisation and supply I tried to sketch in my fourth Letter, largely in the words of some of the chief actors in it?

Within the last fortnight, a skilled observer has been reporting to the British public his impressions of the "Army behind the Lines" in France, as I saw a portion of it last February, in the great British supply bases and hospital camps, on the lines of communication, and throughout the immense and varied activities covered by the British motor transport.

"The Germans," says this recent eye-witness, "have persisted that, even if we could find the men, we could not make the machine, which they have been perfecting for forty years and more. But *it is here!*—operating with perfect smoothness; a machine, which in its mere mass and intricacy, almost staggers the imagination. One cannot speak of the details of the system for fear of saying something which should not

be told; but it is stupendous in its proportion, dealing as it does with the methodical handling of the men in their hundreds of thousands, of all their equipment and supplies, food, miscellaneous baggage and ammunition, and with the endless trains of guns—guns—guns, and shells, by millions upon millions, all brought from England, and all here in their place, or moved from place to place with the rhythm of clockwork. One cannot convey any idea of it, nor grasp it in its entirety; but day by day the immensity of it grows on one, and one realises how trivial beside it has been anything that British military organisation has had to do in the past. That is the real miracle; not the mere millions of men, nor even their bravery, but this huge frictionless machine of which they are a part—this thing which Great Britain has put together here in the last twenty months."

IV

But just as in March my thoughts pressed eagerly forward, from the sight allowed me of the machine, to its uses on the battle-front, to that line of living and fighting men for which it exists—so now.

Only, since I stood upon the hill near Popperinghe on March 2nd, that line of men has been indefinitely strengthened; and the main scene of battle is no longer the Ypres salient. Looking southward from the old windmill, whose supports sheltered us on that cold spring afternoon, I knew that, past Bailleul, and past Neuve Chapelle, I was looking straight toward Albert and the Somme, and I knew too that it was there that the British were taking over a new portion of the line,—so that we might be of *some* increased support—all that was then allowed us by the Allied Command!—to that incredible defence of Verdun, which was in all our minds and hearts.

But what I could not know was that in that

misty distance was hidden—four months away —a future movement, at which no one then guessed, outside the higher brains of the Army. The days went on. The tide of battle ebbed and flowed round Verdun. The Crown Prince hewed and hacked his way, with enormous loss to Germany, to points within three and four miles of the coveted town—fortress no longer. But there France stopped him—like the beast of prey that has caught its claws in the iron network it is trying to batter down, and cannot release them; and there he is still. Meanwhile, in June, seven to eight weeks before the expected moment, Brusiloff's attack broke loose, and the Austrian front began to crumble; just in time to bring the Italians welcome aid in the Trentino.

And still from the Somme to the Yser, the Anglo-French forces waited; and still across the Channel poured British soldiers and British guns. In industrial England, the Whitsuntide holidays had been given up; and there were at any rate some people who knew that

there would be no August holidays either. Leave and letters had been stopped. But there had been apparent signs, wrongly interpreted, before. The great Allied attack on the West —was it ready, *at last?*

Then—with the 27th of June, along the whole British battle-front of 90 miles, there sprang up a violent and continuous bombardment varied by incessant raids on the enemy lines. Those who witnessed that bombardment can hardly find words in which to describe it. "It was an extraordinary and a terrible spectacle," says a correspondent. "Within the dreadful zone the woods are leafless, château and farm and village, alike, mere heaps of ruins." Ah! *ce beau pays de France*—with all its rich and ancient civilisation—it is not French hearts alone that bleed for you! But it was the voice of deliverance, of vengeance, that was speaking in the guns which crashed incessantly day and night, while shells of all calibres rained—so many to the second—from every yard of the British front, on the German

lines. The correspondents with the British Headquarters could only speculate with held breath, as to what was happening under that ghastly veil of smoke and fire on the horizon, and what our infantry would find when the artillery work was done, and the attack was launched.

The 1st of July dawned, a beautiful summer morning, with light mists dispersing under the sun. Precisely to the moment, at 7.30 A. M., the Allied artillery lifted their guns, creating a dense *barrage* of fire between the German front and its support trenches, while the British and French infantry sprang over their parapets and rushed to the attack of the German first line; the British on a front of some twenty-five miles, the French, on about ten miles, on both sides of the Somme. The English journalists, who, watch in hand, saw our men go, "knowing what it was they were going to, marvelled for the fiftieth time at the way in which British manhood has proved itself, in this most terrible of all wars."

But though it was a grand, it was an anxious moment for those who had trained and shaped the New Armies of Britain. How would they bear themselves, these hundreds of thousands of British and Imperial volunteers, men, some of them, with the shortest possible training compatible with efficiency—against the famous troops of Germany—beside the veteran, the illustrious army of France?

Four hours after the fighting began, Sir Douglas Haig telegraphed: "Attack launched north of River Somme this morning at 7.30 A. M. In conjunction with French, British troops have broken into German forward system of defences, on front of sixteen miles. Fighting is continuing. French attack on our immediate right proceeding equally satisfactorily." Twelve hours later, on the same day, when the summer night had fallen on the terrible battle-field, the British Commander-in-Chief added:—"Heavy fighting has continued all day between the rivers Somme and Ancre. On the right of our attack we have captured

the German labyrinth of trenches on a front of seven miles to a depth of 1,000 yards, and have stormed and occupied the strongly fortified villages of Montauban and Mametz. In the centre on a front of four miles we have gained many strong points. North of the Ancre Valley the battle has been equally violent, and in this area we have been unable to retain portions of the ground gained in our first attacks, while other portions remain in our possession. . . . Up to date, 2,000 German prisoners have passed through our collecting stations. The large number of the enemy dead on the battle-field indicate that the German losses have been very severe."

So much for the first day's news. On the following day Fricourt was captured; and the prisoners went up to 3,500, together with a quantity of war material. Meanwhile the French on the right had done brilliantly, capturing five villages, and 6,000 prisoners. The attack was well begun.

And the New Armies?—"Kitchener's Men"?

"Whatever we have imagined of our New Armies," says an eye-witness of the first day's battle, "they are better than we can have ever dared to hope. Nothing has in any case stopped them, except being killed." And a neutral who saw the attack on Mametz told the same eye-witness that he had seen most of the fighting in the world in recent years, and that he "did not believe a more gallant feat was ever performed in war." The story of the British advance was written "in the dead upon the ground, and in the positions as they stand." "Nothing which the Japanese did in the Russian War" was more entirely heroic.

But let me carry on the story.

On Tuesday, July 11th, Sir Douglas Haig reported: "After ten days and nights of continuous fighting our troops have completed the methodical capture of the whole of the enemy's first system of defence on a front of 14,000 yards.

"This system of defence consisted of numerous and continuous lines of foretrenches, sup-

port trenches and reserve trenches, extending to various depths of from 2,000 to 4,000 yards, and included five strongly fortified villages, numerous heavily wired and intrenched woods, and a large number of immensely strong redoubts."

The villages captured were Fricourt, Mametz, Montauban, La Boiselle, and Contalmaison—the latter captured on July 10th, after particularly fierce fighting. Every observer dwells on "the immense strength of the German defences." "All the little villages and woods, each eminence and hollow, have been converted into a fortress as formidable as the character of the ground makes possible." The German has omitted nothing "that could protect him against such a day as this."

Yet steadily, methodically, with many a pause for consolidation of the ground gained, and for the bringing up of the heavy guns, the British advance goes forward — toward Bapaume and Lille; while the French press brilliantly on toward Péronne—both move-

ments aimed at the vital German communications through France and Belgium. Every step of ground, as the Allies gain it, "is wrecked with mines, torn with shell, and watered with the blood of brave men." The wood-fighting, amid the stripped and gaunt trunks rising from labyrinths of wire, is specially terrible; and below the ground everywhere are the deep pits and dugouts, which have not only sheltered the enemy from our fire, but concealed the machine-guns, which often when our men have passed over, emerge and take them in the rear. The German machine-guns seem to be endless; they are skilfully concealed, and worked with the utmost ability and courage.

But nothing daunts the troops attacking day and night, in the name of patriotism, of liberty, of civilisation. Men from Yorkshire and Lancashire, from Northumberland, Westmoreland and Cumberland, the heart of England's sturdy north; men from Sussex and Kent, from Somerset and Devon; the Scotch regiments; the Ulster Division, once the Ulster

Volunteers; the men of Munster and Connaught; the town-lads of Manchester; the youths of Cockney London:—all their names are in the great story. "There were no stragglers—none!" says an officer, describing in a kind of wonder one of the fierce wood-attacks. And these are not the seasoned troops of a Continental Army. They belong to regiments and corps which did not exist, except in name, eighteen months ago; they are units from the four-million army that Great Britain raised for this struggle, before she passed her Military Service Law. The "Old Army," the Expeditionary Force, which the nation owed to the organising genius of Lord Haldane and his General Staff, has passed away, passed into history, with the retreat from Mons, the first victory of Ypres, the saving of the Channel ports; but its spirit remains, and its traditions are firmly planted in the new attackers. I think of the men I saw in March, during that long and weary wait; of the desire—and the patience—in their eyes.

And of patience they and the nations behind them will still have ample need. Since surprise on the Somme front was no longer possible, the great advance has gone surely indeed, but more slowly. On *July 14*, after delay caused by extraordinarily heavy rains, *the German second line was breached*, and their trenches carried, on a front of four miles and held against counter attacks. Longueval, the wood of Bazentin-le-Grand, and the village, Bazentin-le-Petit, were attacked and captured with an *élan* that nothing could resist. "The enemy losses in guns," said the British Headquarters, "are now over 100. We have not lost one." On *July 17*, Ovillers was cleared, Waterlot Farm taken, and 1,500 more yards of the German line. The British had by now taken 11,000 prisoners, to a somewhat larger number taken by the French, 17 heavy guns, 37 field-guns, 30 trench howitzers, and 66 machine-guns. On Saturday night, *July 22-23*, the greater part of Pozières, on the high ground toward Bapaume, was taken. "Short-

ly after midnight," wrote the official correspondent at Headquarters with the Australian Imperial Forces in France, "on the 23rd, by a splendid night attack, the Australians took the greater portion of Pozières." The previous bombardment had been magnificent. "I had never before seen such a spectacle. A large sector of the horizon was lit up not by single flashes, but by a continuous band of quivering light." And under the protection of the guns, the Anzacs swept forward, passing over trenches, so entirely obliterated by shell-fire that they were often not recognised as trenches at all, till they were in the heart of the village. Then for two days they fought from house to house, and trench to trench; till on July 27th came the news—"The whole of the village of Pozières is now in our hands." And the *Times* correspondent writes "our establishment at Pozières will probably be regarded historically as closing the second phase of the battle of the Somme."

Since then (I write on August 16) three

weeks have passed. The German Third Line has been entered at the Bois de Foureaux, the whole of Delville Wood has been carried; and in the combined advance of July 30th, the French swept on to Maurepas on the north of the Somme, and are closely threatening both Combles and Péronne, while we are attacking Thiepval on the left of our line and Guillemont on the right, and pushing forward, north of Pozières, toward Bapaume. The whole of the great advance has been *a thrust up-hill* from the valley floors of the Ancre and the Somme toward a low ridge running roughly east and west and commanding an important stretch of country and vital communications beyond. "It has in just four weeks of effort," writes Mr. Belloc—"accounted for some thirty thousand unwounded or slightly wounded prisoners; for much more than 100 guns; for a belt of territory over five miles in its extreme breadth, and—what is much more important than any of these numerical and local calculations—it has proved itself capable of *continu-*

ous effort against all the concentration which the enemy has been able to bring against it."

But it has done yet more than this. It has welded the French and English Alliance—the wills and minds of the two nations—more closely than ever before; and it has tested the British war-machine—the new Armies and the new arms—as they have never yet been tested in this war. The result has set the heart of England aflame; even while we ponder those long, long casualty lists which represent the bitter price that British fathers and mothers, British wives and daughters have paid, and must still pay, for the only victory which will set up once again the reign of law and humanity in Europe. What the future has in store we cannot see yet in detail; but the inevitable end is clear at last. The man-power of Germany is failing, and with it the insolent confidence of her military caste; the man-power of the Allies, and the gun-power of the Allies, are rising steadily. Russia is well launched on

her return way to Warsaw, to Cracow, to East Prussia. Italy, after the fall of Gorizia, is on the march for Trieste. The Turks are fleeing across the desert of Sinai; and the Allies at Salonika are taking the first steps toward Sofia.

But it is in the "holy spirit of man" itself that the secret of the future lies. On the Somme battle-fields, thousands and thousands of young lives have been again laid down, that England—that France—may live. Here is a letter, written the day before his death in action, on July 1st, the opening day of the offensive, by a young English Officer.* One must read it, if one can, dry-eyed. Not tears, but a steeled will, a purer heart, are what it asks of those for whom the writer died:—

"I am writing this letter to you just before going into action to-morrow morning about dawn.

"I am about to take part in the biggest battle that has yet been fought in France, and

* Published in the *Times*.

one which ought to help to end the war very quickly.

"I never felt more confident or cheerful in my life before, and would not miss the attack for anything on earth. The men are in splendid form, and every officer and man is more happy and cheerful than I have ever seen them.

"I have just been playing a rag game of football in which the umpire had a revolver and a whistle.

"My idea in writing this letter is in case I am one of the 'costs,' and get killed. I do not expect to be; but such things have happened, and are always possible.

"It is impossible to fear death out here, when one is no longer an individual, but a member of a regiment and of an army. To be killed means nothing to me, and it is only you who suffer for it; you really pay the cost.

"I have been looking at the stars, and thinking what an immense distance they are away. What an insignificant thing the loss of, say, forty years of life is compared with them! It

seems scarcely worth talking about. Well, good-bye, you darlings. Try not to worry about it, and remember that we shall meet again really quite soon.

"This letter is going to be posted *if* . . ."

The letter was posted. But its message of Death is also a message of Victory.

MARY A. WARD.

Date Due

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Ward

England's effort

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